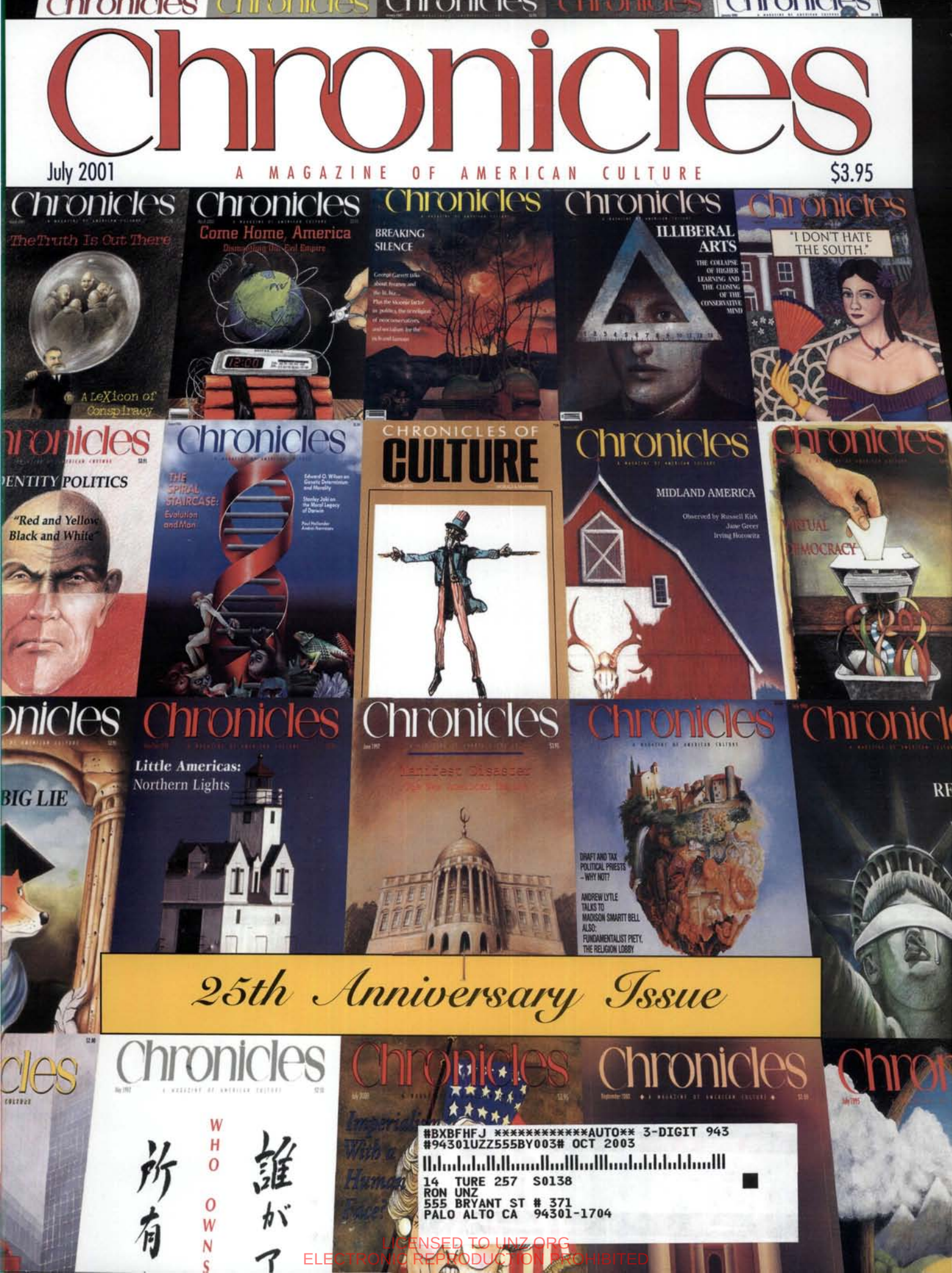

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Looking Back . . . and Forward

George D. O'Neill, Jr.

The Rockford College Institute presents a new publication entitled *Chronicles of Culture*. It will feature reviews of books credited with an impact on the current cultural scene, and provide viewpoints that are usually eliminated from the literary marketplace, or silenced by the Liberal Establishment that runs the media.

We believe that culture, more than ever, engenders attitudes, lifestyles . . . and modes of conduct that create a social atmosphere in which human destinies are formed. We also believe that books, especially novels, still exert an influence on the society and on the individual. We know, too, that the success of a book in America depends on the critical interpretation and acclaim, and we know that all the manipulative power today is in the hands of liberal critics, reviewers, and promoters. We know, finally, that the selling of a book has little to do with its objective worth and even less with its social and moral utility. The *Chronicles of Culture* intends, therefore, to supply a value-oriented criticism which is banned from the pages of the *New York Times*, *Publisher's Weekly*, and the *New York Review of Books* by the liberal bigotry, orthodoxy, and fashion.

. . . The middle-class reader, who happens to be a businessman, finds literary reviews in the *Wall Street Journal*, as that paper keeps track of cultural facts: However, it does it from an eclectic and morally uncommitted point of view, looking for neutral qualifications. We want to show the thoughtful businessman another perspective—namely, how a book, its meaning and success, affects his life, his economic activity, and his sense of social order, which is indispensable to carry out these activities.

The lopsided view of the arts, along with the current "anything goes" posture toward subject matter, has produced a body of works whose offensiveness is only surpassed by its shallowness. The modern liberal reviewer tacitly obliterates a whole realm of natural and human norms by their omission, which renders his critiques not only inadequate, but potentially harmful . . .

—Leopold Tyrmand, September 1977

Leopold Tyrmand's dream was to create a quixotic magazine that would tilt not at windmills but at the real dragons of the anti-civilization headquartered in New York. His essential insight—that Americans mistakenly try to solve cultural problems by political means—remains the guiding principle both of *Chronicles* and of The Rockford Institute. But, although we are as resolute in our determination to renounce New York and all its works, the editors of *Chronicles* have come to recognize the futility—the sheer waste of time and talent required—of continuing to devote our energies to attacking the spurious illiterature of Norman Mailer and Philip Roth or debunking the pretensions of the *New Yorker*, the *Village Voice*, and *Commentary*.

It is too easy to be *against* things, to take a stand against violence and disorder, high taxes and social engineering, deconstructionism and feminism, affirmative action and open immigration. Even evil and stupid people can agree with us on what we hate. We, however, define ourselves by what we love well enough to risk our reputations in defending it: the truth and beauty of the flawed civilization that some of us still refer to as Christendom, the liberties Americans enjoyed in the Old Republic, the peculiar savors of life in out-of-the-way places like the Scottish highlands, the Mississippi Delta, the mountains of Wyoming, and even the plain and fertile prairies of Northern Illinois.

There are remnants of a real America out here in the hinterlands of the Midwest, the South, and the West, and even a few expressions of civilization remaining in Europe. As friends and enemies have acknowledged, we are a band of literate rednecks, of civilized people whose message speaks to ordinary people, and if we had a patron saint, it would be the Shakespeare-loving "savage" of Huxley's *Brave New World*.

What impact have we had? I simply do not know. I do know that writers who parrot a party line or pride themselves on their courage in deviating five percent from official orthodoxy can never accomplish anything. The least that can be said of *Chronicles*' editors and contributors is that they do their best to write well and tell what part of the truth they understand. We know, from the flood of letters we have received over the years, that we have changed the minds and the lives of thousands of Americans. Karl Marx, going to his grave, could hardly have claimed more, and if there ever is an American movement to restore this part of the Christendom that Marx and Freud and all the others have done so much to destroy, we shall have played a significant part in bringing it about. Besides that—and living well among our friends and families—what better is there for a man to do?

—Thomas Fleming, July 2001

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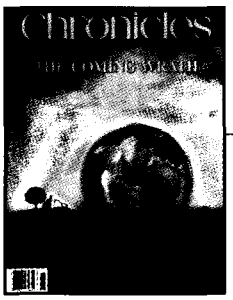

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EDITOR
Thomas Fleming

EXECUTIVE EDITOR
Scott P. Richert

SENIOR EDITOR, BOOKS
Chilton Williamson, Jr.

ASSISTANT EDITOR
Aaron D. Wolf

ART DIRECTOR
H. Ward Sterett

DESIGNER
Melanie Anderson

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS
Katherine Dalton, Samuel Francis, George Garrett, Paul Gottfried, Philip Jenkins, J.O. Tate, Michael Washburn, Clyde Wilson

CORRESPONDING EDITORS
Janet Scott Barlow, Bill Kauffman, Donald Livingston, William Mills, William Murchison, Andrei Navrozov, Jacob Neusner

FILM EDITOR
George McCartney

FOREIGN-AFFAIRS EDITOR
Srdja Trifkovic

LEGAL-AFFAIRS EDITOR
Stephen B. Presser

RELIGION EDITOR
Harold O.J. Brown

CIRCULATION MANAGER
Cindy Link

PUBLISHER
The Rockford Institute

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A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE

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On the American Interest

Srdja Trifkovic's twin contributions to the April 2001 issue (*Cultural Revolutions* and "Sharon's Victory and U.S. Policy in the Middle East," *The American Interest*) reveal the two sides of the same sadly debased coinage of mindset which has led the Serbs into their present morass. He writes that Yugoslav President Vojislav Kostunica "is a moral man . . . loathe to make compromises on an issue of principle" (namely, whether to hand Slobodan Milosevic over to The Hague's war-crimes tribunal), whereas Ariel Sharon is a "19th-century-style nationalist" prime minister of an Israel that the United States must support less ardently "in favor of cool evenhandedness" so that "resurgent Islam . . . a major threat to global security" will somehow become less of a threat.

While everybody knows that European Jews experienced cruel mass extermination in World War II at the hands of German forces and local groups working on their behalf, virtually nobody knows, even today, that the same thing can be said of the Serbs, hundreds of thousands of whom perished in Croatian *Ustashi* concentration camps with the Nazis' blessing. This disparity in public awareness stems from the different opportunities to make and act on moral choices that presented themselves to the postwar leadership of the two groups.

The Jewish leadership that emerged in the West after World War II, and later in the state of Israel, saw past their pain and anger and ruled out revenge as a strategy for comeback and survival. Instead, backed by the sympathy of the U.S.-aligned West, they knocked on every door with the message that the holocaust was as much the product of the cool indifference of the world powers as it was of religious intolerance and the evil ideology of one government. They made support for Israel a moral issue through which people could confront the enormity of all that wanton death, the details of which they have made sure are endlessly kept in the public consciousness. During the Vietnam War, the United States began to back Israel not only to satisfy the U.S. public, which had become pro-Israel largely because of this information campaign, but to align itself with the independent military winner that Israel had unexpectedly become. News that Israeli pilots were shooting down Russian-piloted MIGs over Egyptian airspace during the 1971 War of Attrition clinched the Pentagon's high appraisal of the U.S.-Israel military alliance.

By contrast, after World War II, most surviving Serbs were locked away in the Yugoslavia of Tito, whom the United States took to be an enemy of our enemy, because he appeared to defy the Soviets as they swallowed up Eastern Europe. In the 1950's, Tito's own government, seeking to smother interethnic strife, successfully demanded that the United Nations withdraw publications documenting the Serbian holocaust, the memory of which soon dropped out of public consciousness. Their captivity under the communists throttled any public outcry over World War II atrocities against the Serbs, as many Serbs rightfully feared retribution in Tito's torture chambers. Instead, among not just Serbs but virtually all of Yugoslavia's other ethnic groups, an abiding, extremist "19th-century-style nationalism" won out as the dominant way of private thinking about what would eventually have to happen. When communist dominion collapsed, what greeted the eyes of the world was not a Serbian-led drive to bring old war criminals to justice within an independent state based on the rule of law, but a ghastly new archipelago of Serbian-run death camps organized for no purpose save to resurrect the horrors of World War II—only this time randomly against non-Serbs, instead of Serbs. Perhaps Yugoslav (read: Serbian) President Kostunica is a "moral man . . . loathe to make compromises on an issue of principle," but since we never heard of him until after the aerial bombardment stopped, we don't know how loudly he had denounced the ongoing atrocities, if indeed he ever did.

Such people as passed for Serbian leaders after the communist collapse chose revenge over reliance on moral suasion and lawful behavior, and the Serbs still suffer for it. Israel thrives, by contrast, for having attracted friends by eschewing blood revenge in favor of moral image-building. In the light of the recent spy-plane incident off the coast of China, Dr. Trifkovic ought to drop the pretentious "cool evenhandedness"

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rhetoric and rethink the case for cutting Israel loose. The Israelis, who almost sold the Chinese an advanced surveillance aircraft (until we reminded them that they risked the benefits of our alliance if they followed through on the deal), are people we don't need "going it on their own" as we prepare to face off with China over control of the West Pacific over the next decade.

—Ted Gruen
Dallas, TX

Dr. Trifkovic Replies:

That resurgent Islam would be less of a threat to American interests if the United States were perceived in the Arab world as more evenhanded is not a remarkable claim. It has been made by journalists, politicians, and policy analysts too numerous to mention.

Mr. Gruen is right about the way in which the Serbian holocaust has been airbrushed from history, but he is wrong about Tito's reasons for doing so. Far from "seeking to smother interethnic strife," Tito kept it on the back burner throughout his 35-year rule to ensure his role as the indispensable arbiter. He played *divide et impera* with his own subjects and thus prevented the development of institutions for conflict management that could outlive him. The Serbs got the worst of it not only because Tito was a Croat but because they were the most numerous group, and he needed a more level field for his game. There was no better way to ensure that the wounds remained unhealed than to pretend they didn't exist. The fruits of Tito's *après moi le déluge* were obvious a decade after his death.

Mr. Gruen's reference to the "ghastly new archipelago of Serbian-run death camps" disappoints me. Doesn't he read *Chronicles*? We have repeatedly and convincingly debunked the myth of various Yugoslav atrocities and "genocides"—from the "picture that fooled the world" to Racak. The fact that the "mainstream" media have often followed in our footsteps some years later is a compliment we are too modest to emphasize as often as we should.

I am surprised by Mr. Gruen's claim that "we never heard of [Kostunica] until after the aerial bombardment stopped." I have counted four references to Dr. Kostunica in these pages before the bombing, including a lengthy quote of his in my article, "Slobodan Milosevic, Our S.O.B." (*Views*, June 1997), and Thomas Fleming's remarkably prescient prediction that one day Kostunica would become Yugoslavia's president ("Turn to the Dark Side," *Perspective*, January 1999). As for Dr. Kostunica's alleged failure to condemn war crimes, in his message to The Rockford Institute's conference on U.S. policy in the Balkans last November (see *The American Interest*, February 2001), he said that "we should stop pretending that there is a story of blame from which the Serbs are exempt." He continued: "We know enough about the world to know that international politics can distort the idea of justice. Let me assure you: Anti-Serbianism is as common a prejudice in the Balkans as is anti-Americanism on the world stage. The essential case for justice, the need for it, is simply this: that the human heart craves it. We accept that the judicial process should be an integral part of eventual reconciliation. But the instrumentalization of judicial retaliation can only postpone effective reconciliation, and make it more difficult."

On Property Rights

I applaud your interest in property rights in the April 2001 issue, "Your Land Is Their Land." I was especially interested in the article "For Keeps! A Christian Defense of Property" by Scott P. Richert (*Views*), since I have come to know and work with two of the four families who are used as examples of the expanding misuse of eminent domain and "Quick Take."

The plight of the Torres and Ditzler families came to my attention more than a year ago when a concerned citizen contacted the Illinois Conservation Voters, of which I am a founding member. The Torreses believed that the threat by the city of Rockford to take the property on which their grocery store sits and give it to another grocer is un-American. As Lupe Torres, son of the owner, asked me, "Can this happen in America?" Apparently the answer is *yes*, as the Illinois Supreme Court's April 19 decision in *Southwestern Illinois Development Authority* v. *National City Environmental, L.L.C.* indicates. In that case, private property was taken from one owner and given to another because "the legislature has vested in the [Southwestern Illinois Development] Authority the power of eminent domain to assist in the development of commercial projects including racetracks and parking facilities. The acquisition of the Property being in furtherance of the public purpose, the Authority did not abuse its discretion by the use of its eminent domain powers." The Torres case is still in local court.

The Ditzler case, where half of a legally blind veteran's family homesite was seized for a road project, remains unresolved as well. Now, Tom and Jan Ditzler are waiting for a court date to be set to determine the value of the property that was seized last summer. The four-lane road is being built directly adjacent to their home. Large portions of their remaining property have flooded as a direct result of the road building. Should water damage to the rest of their property be considered in the final settlement? And why is Winnebago County insisting that the Ditzlers take payment for the property before the jury trial that will determine the settlement?

How has this happened in America? Surely there are groups or people who, upon learning the compelling facts and circumstances of these cases, would come to their aid?

Over the last year, Illinois Conservation Voters contacted (among others) all of the following organizations and individuals: Pacific Legal Foundation; Common Cause; Defenders of Property Rights; the Rutherford Institute; American Veterans organizations; Lighthouse for the Blind; Oprah Winfrey; Geraldo Rivera; Rush Limbaugh; U.S. Rep. Donald Manzullo (R-IL); U.S. Sen. Richard J. Durbin (D-IL); and Secretary of the Army Joseph Westphal.

In all of our communications, we offered to provide additional information and assistance to facilitate their actions to aid these families in defense of their property rights. Still, none of these organizations or individuals came to the aid of the Torreses or Ditzlers. The *Chicago Tribune* eventually ran a front-page story on the Ditzler issue, and Illinois Gov. George Ryan vetoed "Quick Take" legislation that included language related to the Ditzler property.

Both of these cases are still in court. Both families need your help in defending their property rights.

—Renee A. McNitt
Illinois Conservation Voters
Fox River Grove, IL

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THE ITALIAN ELECTION has dealt the international left a severe setback. Although the gap between the vote percentages of the center-right coalition (*Casa della Liberta*) and the center-left (*Ulivo*) was fairly small—especially if the hard-core communists (the *Rifondazione Communista*, who campaigned as the "left wing of the center-left") are factored in—because of proportional representation, Silvio Berlusconi's "Liberty House" will hold 177 seats in the Senate (as opposed to 128 for the "Olive") and 368 seats in the *Camera dei Deputati* (as opposed to the center-left's 242).

The election is highly significant for several reasons: first, because the international left made a concerted effort to demonize Berlusconi in the closing days of the campaign; second, because Italian leftists did everything they could to Clintonize the campaign and, even after the election, to put a kind of Florida spin on their defeat; third, and most importantly, because Berlusconi did not run on a soft-core Reagan-Thatcherite platform but took strong ideological stands on several explosive issues that would make English Tories and American Republicans sick to their stomachs. Imagine Pat Buchanan running in a coalition with supporters of the League of the South, the Libertarian Party, and the *Wanderer*.

The attacks on Berlusconi were almost astonishing. From all over Europe, leftist politicians teamed up with Eurotrash journalists to paint a portrait of a complete monster—part Rupert Murdoch (a cynical media mogul buying an election), part Jörg Haider (a far-right racist bigot). In the closing days of the campaign, Italy's "ugly beautiful people" (as Leopold Tyrmand used to call America's lefty glams) were out in force. Roberto Benigni—whose comic tribute to the holocaust, *La Vita e Bella*, was condemned for insensitivity and antisemitism—did his best to recover respectability by attacking Berlusconi. Going on tax-supported government television, the untalented comic clowned, mugged, and hissed his contempt for this threat to Italian civilization.

The lies begin with the description of the two coalitions. Berlusconi's *Casa della Liberta* is genuinely "center-right," comprising moderate ex-Christian Democrats, proponents of privatization, decentralists from the *Lega Nord*, and the mostly Catholic nationalists of Gianfranco Fini's *Alleanza Nazionale* (formerly the *Movimento Sociale Italiano*, formerly the *Partito Fascista*); the *Ulivo*, by contrast, consists of hard-core communists who changed their name, flanked by revisionist Marxists and ultra-hard-core Stalinists of the *Rifondazione Communista* party. In today's world, a Trotsky-Stalin coalition is moderate and respectable, while a Bush-Buchanan tandem would be extremist.

In Italy on the day of the election, I knew that something was up when the TV stations announced that they would delay their coverage for an hour because of various complications, and would not even talk about the exit polling. Although Berlusconi had held a commanding lead in early April, the media attack had resulted in a dead heat with Rutelli, a good-looking nobody on whom the communists were staking everything. Sergio Romano had been saying that the results would be so close as to make forming a government difficult, but the looks on the faces of the experts on *Rai Uno* told a different story. As they began to record the early returns, the pundits betrayed an air of desperation.

The spin began. The real significance was the poor turnout for the *Lega*, which could spell trouble for the coalition; the long lines and complaints of voters in Rome and Milan, which hinted at fundamental inequities in the system (never mind that the communists control the system); the impact of the *Rifondazione* communists' decision to run a separate campaign (the communist Bertinotti was assigned the Ralph Nader part in the drama), which split the vote and handed Berlusconi his victory.

Most of these distractions were obvious red herrings. Of course, the *Lega*'s failure should have been predicted. The last time around, Berlusconi's coalition defeated the left with the strong support of the *Lega Nord* (about ten percent of the vote). After Umberto Bossi was given more than he could really have dreamed of having, the North Italian leader bolted the coalition and turned his country over to the tender mercies of the left. "Padanian" voters cannot be blamed for backing Berlusconi's *Forza Italia* party this time around: A few more years of communism could finish Italy off.

The real significance, of course, is that the left *lost* the election, and the right *won*—not the warmed-over Thatcherites and soft-core Reagan followers, but a rightist coalition that announced its intentions of controlling immigration, undoing the leftist "reform" programs that are destroying Italian education, decentralizing the political system, and rehabilitating the economy.

Berlusconi's speeches in the closing days of the campaign were music to ears that had been deafened by the capitalist-socialist platitudes of American campaigns. In one televised speech, he defended the free market, while declaring that he was not a disciple of Anglo-Saxon liberalism. Individuals mattered, he said, but only in the context of the family, the community, the nation. It is, of course, essential to defend individual economic freedom from the predations of government bureaucracy, but it is just as important to defend the family and to protect the autonomy of local and regional communities—just as the nation has to be protected from globalization.

How seriously are we to take these philosophical professions? Berlusconi was, after all, a friend and backer of the crooked socialist Bettino Craxi; he made much of his vast fortune through suspect dealings with the political system; and the soft pornography purveyed by his television empire gives little evidence of the Christian social thought espoused in his speeches. Still, it is significant to have a prime minister of a major country publicly endorse the best elements of both free-enterprise liberalism and Catholic subsidiarity.

Now it is up to Berlusconi. If he really is a mere Thatcherite, he will behave like an American Republican by giving good speeches while selling his country out to the international forces that wish to devour it. If he is the Italian patriot he claims to be—if he makes even a little progress toward carrying out his program—the Italians will be the luckiest nation in the Western world.

—Thomas Fleming

BELGRADE, YUGOSLAVIA, was my destination on April 12. I was accompanied by two other members of Congress—

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one Republican, one Democrat, both good friends.

Both had voted for the 1999 bombing, although my Republican colleague had voted for it only because he felt he had to "support our troops." I had not only voted against it, but had spoken against it several times on the House floor. I had said, repeatedly, that we were bombing people who would like to be our friends. Even more importantly, I said we should not bomb people unless there was a real threat to our national security or a vital U.S. interest at stake. Neither, in my opinion, required the bombing of Yugoslavia.

We went to Belgrade to confirm the release of the second half of a $100-million aid package. We met, at separate times and places, with members of parliament, Serbian Prime Minister Zoran Djindic, and President Vojislav Kostunica.

In *Chronicles* and State Department briefing papers, I had read that Kostunica is a nationalist and the Yugoslav official most averse to trying Slobodan Milosevic in the International Tribunal at The Hague rather than in the local courts of Serbia.

"Nationalist" has become a bad word to liberal intelligentsia around the world and to most in the U.S. Foreign Service, who have served so long in other countries that they seem to pride themselves on being citizens of the World rather than of the United States. They regard anyone with patriotic, nationalistic feelings and beliefs as unenlightened, xenophobic, possibly racist, and certainly not sophisticated, cosmopolitan, and forward-thinking (like themselves).

In each meeting, I said that, as a former criminal court judge (for seven-and-a-half years before going to Congress), I could understand the Serbian desire to try Milosevic in the courts of Yugoslavia. Moreover, most Americans probably do not know or care that there is an International War Crimes Tribunal in The Hague.

I am in no way defending Milosevic. He was a communist who committed horrible crimes while in power. However, we should not be telling another country how to handle its own criminals.

There is some inconsistency in our refusal to join the International Criminal Court (which we should not do), only to order Yugoslavia to ship Milosevic to The Hague. (I am sure that most in our own State Department and Foreign Service believe it is terrible that we have not signed on to the International Criminal Court.)

Those who so desperately want Milosevic tried by the International War Crimes Tribunal apparently believe this would somehow justify the mess they made in the Balkans, which resulted in hundreds of thousands more forced from their homes and many thousands more killed than if we had simply let the people in that region work things out on their own.

When I first went to Yugoslavia about six years ago, I witnessed huge demonstrations against Milosevic. Former President Clinton promised that we would be out of Bosnia by the end of 1996, yet almost all of our actions either prolonged things or made the situation worse, keeping Milosevic in power longer.

One of the worst things we did in Yugoslavia was to turn NATO from a purely defensive organization into an offensive war-making machine. Rather than recognizing that NATO had long ago served its purpose and closing it down, the same people who got us into the Balkans mess keep expanding NATO, committing us to going to war in even more places in the future.

In recent years, we have wasted billions of taxpayer dollars in Haiti, Rwanda, Somalia, Bosnia, Kosovo—and perhaps next, Macedonia. In Iraq, we are spending four million dollars a day more than a decade after a "war" in which Iraqi troops surrendered to TV camera crews or anyone who would take them. The United States has a CNN foreign policy: We send our troops and huge amounts of money into any small war that is featured on the nightly news.

Because we so often see a map of the United States on one page in a book, we sometimes forget how unbelievably huge this country really is. I hope that, somehow, our national leaders will develop the humility to be satisfied with attempting to manage the United States of America, rather than wanting to micromanage the entire world.

—*Rep. John J. Duncan, Jr.*

"BORKING" is back. The eponymous activity first perpetrated on Judge Robert Bork when he was nominated for a seat on the United States Supreme Court is the practice of painting a proposed judicial appointee as consciously demonic, in order to excite particular interest groups to oppose his appointment. Some might oppose Borkees because of honest differences over judicial perspective, but this is certainly not required.

The Ur-Borker was Sen. Edward Kennedy, who, when President Ronald Reagan nominated Bork to the Court in 1987, intoned on the floor of the Senate that "Robert Bork's America is a land in which women would be forced into back-alley abortions, blacks would sit at segregated lunch counters, rogue police could break down citizens' doors in midnight raids, schoolchildren could not be taught about evolution, writers and artists would be censored at the whim of government, and the doors of the Federal courts would be shut on the fingers of millions of citizens for whom the judiciary is often the only protector of the individual rights that are the heart of our democracy." As Bork reported in his biographical account of the incident, Senator Kennedy explained to the besieged nominee that his remarks were "nothing personal." It is difficult not to conclude that Kennedy knew his anti-Bork rhetoric was a total fabrication. We may be about to see the same activity on an even greater scale.

Over the course of the next four years, President George W. Bush will have the opportunity to remake the federal judiciary in whatever image he chooses. When he was campaigning, candidate Bush said he would appoint judges close to the judicial mold of Supreme Court Associate Justices Antonin Scalia and Clarence Thomas. This was explained to mean that Bush wanted jurists who would not legislate from the bench but instead interpret the Constitution according to its original understanding. Four years is often enough time to appoint a sitting majority of lower federal court judges; since turnover rates for the federal judiciary may be accelerating, there is a very real prospect that Bush appointees may soon be the dominant force in jurisprudence. Indeed, several vacancies may open up on the Supreme Court within two or three years, and the closely divided Court may change dramatically in character.

If Bush keeps his campaign promises, the era when the federal courts dramatically cut back on traditional state prerogatives in areas of morality, education, law enforcement, legislative apportionment, and other matters may be coming to a close. The control of policy by litigation (and, indeed, the use of the courts by litigants and their lawyers to frustrate state civil-justice reform) might just be imperiled.

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And so the first (relatively modest) list of federal lower-court nominees put forth by President Bush in May—a list that even included two minority judges originally placed on the bench by President Clinton—alarmed the Borkers. Particular fire was directed at Michael McConnell, a soft-spoken professor at the University of Utah School of Law, who was nominated for a seat on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit. McConnell was an editor of the law review while a student at the University of Chicago Law School; he then clerked for an appeals-court judge and for Supreme Court Justice William J. Brennan, Jr. He later served as assistant to the U.S. solicitor general, assistant general counsel for the U.S. Office of Management and Budget, and as a law professor at the University of Chicago for a dozen years. He was recently offered a tenured appointment at the Harvard Law School. He is an exceptionally effective advocate before the U.S. Supreme Court, often representing religious organizations. It is difficult to imagine someone with more impeccable credentials, but McConnell, like almost every other serious student of constitutional law, had expressed reservations about Supreme Court decisions "discovering" a right to abortion in the Constitution, as well as similar acts of judicial creativity.

McConnell is also generally known to be a person of strong personal religious convictions, and he has argued that the original understanding of the Constitution included some place for religion in the public square. The Rev. Barry W. Lynn, executive director of Americans United for Separation of Church and State, immediately Borked: "This nomination represents a terrible assault on American freedom by the Bush administration. McConnell is the religious right's dream court nominee. He's a conservative Christian who's willing to use the force of government to impose his viewpoint." Reverend Lynn isn't quite up to Senator Kennedy's standards, but he shows promise. Soon it may be time to recall Sen. Alan Simpson's words during the Bork hearings, when he called the Borkers "the 4-H Club of hype, hoorah, hysteria and hubris." Said Simpson, "I referred to them once as 'bug-eyed zealots.' I have no reason to change that opinion at all." Nor would he have one now.

—Stephen B. Presser

VLADIMIR PUTIN's one-year anniversary as president of Russia was marked by a Soviet-style celebration. "We are back to pretending again," my Russian friend commented as we watched the stage-managed antics of several thousand young people, all of them wearing T-shirts bearing the likeness of Vladimir Putin, converging on Vasilevsky Spusk (adjacent to the Kremlin) on May 7. They are members of a pro-Putin youth organization, one of several that have sprung up in recent months. Everybody wants to suck up to *vlast* (the authorities, though the "powers that be" might be closer to the Russian) nowadays. Russian elites have more or less consolidated around the "little colonel," as the ex-KGB officer is derisively called by some of my Russian pals who see the hand of the Kremlin behind the "Marching Together" group's performance. Some of the participants openly admitted that "material incentives" had played a role in their trip (they were shipped in from all over the country) to Moscow.

Putin is obviously a front man, a suit put forward by elites to protect the kleptocracy built by his predecessor, Boris Yeltsin. He has not let them down. He put on a good show, seizing control of Vladimir Gusinsky's NTV station, running "Gus" out of town, and letting Russia's former "oligarch number one," Boris Abramovich Berezovsky (BAB), know he was unwelcome in these parts. Thus, Mr. Law and Order made "war on the oligarchs," providing cover for Gusinsky's and Berezovsky's replacements, who are now busy fighting over the morsels of property Gus and BAB left behind. It turns out that the "war on the oligarchs" was just another "re-division of property," with Russia's gangsters/oligarchs cutting up the shrinking economic pie once more.

Meanwhile, Russia is being whittled away, little by little. The country's infrastructure continues to wear out. The May 10 fire that knocked out a Russian military command-and-control facility (temporarily putting several Russian spy satellites out of action) was just the latest in a series of "technological catastrophes" (the *Kursk* submarine disaster, the Moscow TV tower fire) that have illustrated the country's technical/industrial decline. The flamboyant "ultranationalist" Vladimir Zhirinovsky has proposed legalizing multiple marriages to help cope with the country's demographic disaster: Russia is losing nearly a million a year in population, but nobody wants to talk about the factors that have accelerated the country's demise, including alcoholism (the state and Kremlin-friendly oligarchs control the production and sale of vodka), abortion, and suicide. And the oligarchs have found a profitable new industry, with children disappearing from orphanages and being sold by their relations to supply the international trade in human organs.

There will be no Day of Reckoning for the Russians, just the slow winding down of a nation and civilization in retreat. So the Russians are back to pretending again, as they did under Brezhnev, that their country is a superpower, that their leader is the Father of the Peoples, and that all is well and the plan has been overfulfilled. Putin, who particularly appears to enjoy ceremony and the trappings of power, will hand out more medals in the land where everybody is a hero. It is a painful thing to watch a country die. The West should observe closely—and learn.

—Denis Petrov

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[I]t is because the Serbians have been warlike that we have found it possible to be peaceful. If they are fierce it is because no courage short of sheer fanaticism could have kept the frontiers of Christendom against such locust-clouds of foes, while we were electing our first parliaments and building our first cathedrals. While all that we call the world was being made they were the wall of the world . . .
—G.K. Chesterton

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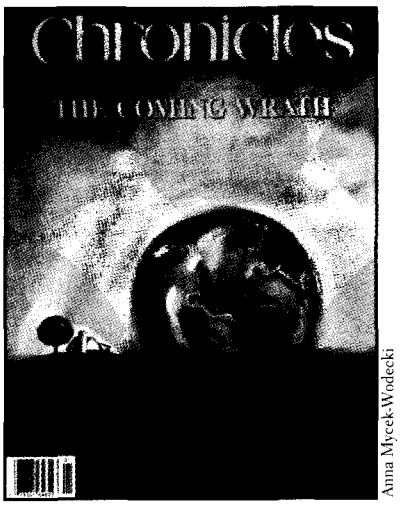

Anna Mycek-Wodecki

Flies Trapped in Honey

by Thomas Fleming

Nineteen ninety-one was the year of revolutions, the greatest, perhaps, since 1848. Many who observed the events from safe seats on this side of the Atlantic must have recalled Churchill's great Fulton speech, in which he described the "Iron Curtain" that had "descended across the continent," cutting off "all the capitals of the ancient states of Central and Eastern Europe," from Berlin to Belgrade. That curtain was lifted, not slowly and ponderously, but—from the perspective that even a year affords—almost all at once.

What is really going on, almost no one in the United States can know, so ignorant are we of the languages and histories of all of Europe, particularly the East. Even before the statues had toppled and the names of cities had changed, swarms of patent-medicine salesmen were arriving on every flight from America; social democrats from Harvard, urging the Russians to follow the example of Sweden at the very moment that the Swedes were realizing what a botch they had made of their country. The social democrats, however, had been beaten to the punch by professional free-enterprisers eager to sell ex-communists on the merits of state capitalism. What a competition: career bureaucrats and lapdog academics, slickers who had never earned an honest dollar in their lives, direct-mail con artists who had been living off what they could siphon from the pensions of retired Army officers and patriotic widows. The socialists and capitalists alike are spending their hard-earned alms on "fact-finding" tours of the Soviet Union or playing missionaries to the victims of communism. . . .

With all the disinterested goodwill in the world, it is hard for Americans to understand what is going on in so apparently familiar a country as Germany. . . . East Germans—reportedly fleeing from religious and political oppression—did not flock to the churches, universities, and newspaper offices of the West. They headed straight for the discount stores where they loaded up on stereo systems, VCRs, and big-screen TV sets, all bought on time. . . . [T]he first item on the agenda of the new Rumanian government was, apparently, liberalizing abortion; Big Macs, jeans, rock music, and pornography are the products in greatest demand all over the former dominions of the Soviet empire; finally, it is pulp fiction *à la* Sidney Sheldon and Stephen King, and not the censored works of Solzhenitsyn, that are selling everywhere on the free market of the street. The repressed peoples of the East are not lusting after the Common Law or a free press; neither individual dignity nor the principle of habeas corpus are the specters haunting Europe, but greed and self-indulgence. It is our vices—our depravities and addictions—that we are exporting, not the virtues of our way of life.

This is in fact the triumph of what we call democracy over what they called communism, though neither term has the slightest thing to do with the actual social and political systems of America and the Soviet Union. Their system was doomed to fail from the start, because it demanded sacrifices too great for mortal flesh to bear. Ideally, Marxist communism is a system of equality in which all distinctions of sex, wealth, class, and ethnicity disappear. People work in common for the common good and rear their children in common to enable their wives (if there really would be wives and not simply women) to serve the state to their highest productive capacity.

This is, as I have written in a 1988 book, politics against the grain of human nature. Even in the short run of a single generation, it could not succeed. Tell people they cannot work for themselves and set aside something for their children, and they will either find ways to cheat or else they will quit working altogether. The market was not something invented by Adam Smith; it is the automatic and inevitable tool devised by human nature to satisfy natural needs. All the jackboots, propaganda, and concentration camps in the world will never succeed in creating a New Soviet Man, except temporarily among a few teenage idealists. The rest of us are too lazy and too selfish to

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live in Utopia. At best, we might make weekend visits and return with glowing reports on universal literacy and constitutions outlawing the death penalty. . . .

Overt repression breeds dissent, but a religion that thrives on persecution may fall into decay as an establishment. (Consider only the case of the Church of England.) Lenin, Stalin, and Brezhnev controlled the press, attacked the churches, and outlawed rival political parties. The result was *samizdat* publication, clandestine piety, and the monumental work of Solzhenitsyn. During the same period in the United States, the press has been free (or at least up for grabs to the highest bidder), religion unfettered, and political parties of every type (except, for a brief period, revolutionary movements) tolerated, and the result is the narrowest spectrum of opinion that can be observed in any civilized country. The greatest political debates in the United States are the mutual recriminations of left liberals and center liberals over whether or not affirmative action policies really help minorities to achieve equality. A goal that would have been mocked and despised by most political philosophers and virtually every sensible person in Europe and the United States is now held aloft as the highest ideal, unchallenged by dissent. Since the 1930's, there have been no American dissidents to criticize the fundamental assumptions of the regime. There is no American equivalent of *From Under the Rubble*. Why? Is it because our system is so perfect that it is immune to criticism or because our culture is so servile that no one with anything to risk has the courage to go into opposition?

Soviet communism had its Marx and Lenin, but for American social democracy there is no one ideologue, no one revolutionary who midwifed and gave birth to the system. The political leaders responsible were many, but Wilson, Hoover, and the Roosevelts are the most important. As for the ideologues, their name is legion, from Locke to Rawls, but it is the Lockean tradition culminating in the prosaic figure of John Dewey that has slowly and inexorably created the ideological regime that has stolen the name "democracy."

The features of that regime are so familiar that, like a man who unexpectedly catches sight of himself in a mirror, we are almost incapable of recognizing them. I can only list a few of them: first and foremost, the elevation of the state to a pagan divinity. If there are wrongs in the world—a man beating his wife, an employer insulting his hireling—then the state will redress them. Most of the alleged wrongs have something to do with inequality, of wealth, status, power, intelligence, opportunities, or even good looks. . . . We live this absurd comedy every day and can no longer laugh at Ionesco or shudder at Orwell. Modern society has already overtaken and surpassed their most bitter fantasies. The real question is why there is so little serious opposition, even from the right, particularly from the right.

The answer, in a nutshell, is that John Dewey, who couldn't write a decent English sentence and whose knowledge of history and literature was a string of platitudes, was right on a fundamental point that escaped the brilliant and learned Marx. This vital point is expressed in the old proverb: You can catch more flies with honey than with gall (or vinegar). . . .

A Puritan Vermonter, Dewey lost his religious faith and ceased to attend the Congregational Church some time in his 30's. He was, nonetheless, a deeply religious man who regarded himself as the prophet of the faith that would replace Christianity, that is democracy. Like the fabled Jesuits of every Protestant's nightmare, Dewey knew it was important to start early. Children had to be weaned away from their parents' particularities, their superstitions and prejudices, if a new and better human society was to be created.

Every political theory is a theory of human nature in disguise, and Dewey, while conceding the existence of natural instincts, put himself solidly behind the views of Locke and Helvetius: Human beings enter the world as malleable clay that is molded by custom and circumstance. Unlike Helvetius, Dewey realized that nature and custom were formidable obstacles. To overcome them would require a wholesale reformation of social institutions. This would be difficult, he argued, but far from impossible.

Take the case of property. Unlike the Bolsheviks who simply confiscated the land, shot the farmers who resisted, and starved the rest, Dewey recognized an instinct for possession. But since "consumption is the normal end of possession," he conceived of "a state of things in which the property impulse will get full satisfaction by holding goods as mine in just the degree in which they were visibly administered for a benefit in which a corporate community shared." Translated into English, Dewey's argument boils down to this: If men are allowed to gratify their instincts on mere consumption and enjoyment, they will gladly accept state ownership or, at least, control of land, resources, and goods. Let people enjoy their condo or apartment, and they will not wonder about who really owns it: the bank that gave the mortgage or the government that stands behind the bank and is able to confiscate the property to build a highway or a baseball stadium for the "corporate community."

Property is only the smallest part of the picture, and Dewey himself never understood more than a fraction of what he and his corevolutionaries were planning. Like most men who deny human nature, they worked by instinct, dimly understanding that the road to a man's heart is through his stomach—and his glands.

Imagine the sort of primitive state of nature in which the human species slowly formed its character. Like other animals, the primary needs are related to survival and procreation, and he who lives to have the most children succeeds in passing on his particular qualities to successive generations. . . .

Winners in the competition for food and sex would have to have certain qualities. Intelligence, of course, good health and strength, but since men are rarely rational about the things that count toward their survival, they must rely on instincts. The *libido dominandi* is an essential trait, because it drives one man to seek dominion over another and ensures the winner greater access to what he wants. And what is it he wants? Food, for one thing, especially good red meat with lots of protein and fats. In the wild, you can't get enough of it, and it takes the prick of a particular hunger to send a man off hunting game, when he might just as well dig up the tubers under his feet. Sweets and salt are also in short supply, and every human animal grows up craving steak and potato chips and candy.

With his belly full, the young savage's fancy turns to thoughts of love, although it is certainly "love not taken lightly." The winners in the genetic competition will not have been ethereal young men who liked to talk art and politics in what they imagine to be British accents. . . . An acute sensibility to feminine charm has always been a defining quality of the good man, even the good man who has been taught to confine his attentions to the mother of his children.

Of course, it is one thing to want women, another to get

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them, and even the most savage suitors had to face prospective fathers-in-law who were looking for the same kind of qualities that fathers-in-law always look for: They want a man who can provide for their little girl—and ensure the success of their own qualities in the great genetic lottery that produced human nature. A typical American teenager who divided his time between pigging out and making lewd remarks may be straight on the basics, but he would not have impressed daddy Magog.

Men still, even in this century of democracy and progress, come into this world as paleolithic savages, with the same appetites and inclinations as the sons of that African Eve who is supposed to be "our general mother." Try to suppress them, and our appetites will only find more devious channels and outlets toward their gratification. You cannot alter or suppress human nature; you can only warp its expression. The great success of American democracy is its ability to satisfy the most basic instincts of the human race, while at the same time virtually eliminating its highest qualities. We are the fly caught in honey that has hardened into amber.

Meals used to require the effort and talent of a hardworking woman. Who needs a balanced diet or even good-tasting food, when he can slop up Big Macs, salted and sugared french fries still dripping in grease, and wash them down with soft drinks invented to kill off diabetics? . . .

For most men, sexual gratification used to mean marriage, a commitment to one (or at most two or three) women and the offspring they bore—for it was this commitment that daddy Magog stipulated as the price of his daughter. In a state of nature, Don Juan would either have to make himself chief or be killed by the first father or husband whose female property he damaged. But now, a young man of any quality can be assured of a steady supply of willing girls. Today, boys of 12 and 13 years are besieged on the telephone by a dazzling assortment of Kimberleys, Heathers, and Taras. (I speak now as a father.) The situation hardly changes when they marry. Women have now sunk to the low, predatory level of men, and with both parties in a race to rack up the most extramarital points, the high divorce rate in the Western nations is hardly surprising.

Of course, there is the loser, who "can't get no girly action." This is the "kind of man who reads *Playboy*" and checks out the X-rated films from the Family Video Store. To be fair, even some of the Don Juans are addicted to pornography. It helps to keep their interest up, even when the charms of Morgan or Tiffany grow stale. There is nothing unusual or unnatural in this. In the beginning, any successful male had to be constantly on the alert for the glimpse or scent of the attractive female who would make him "immortal with a kiss." But pornography is the Big Mac of sex: It titillates and teases; it may even seem to satisfy for the moment. But the more you get, the sicker you become, and eventually you forget what real food or real women (with real names) are like.

This is the triumph of American democracy, to have created a line of succubi that haunt our waking dreams until we have lost our appetite for reality. Television, radio, movies, and electronic music might all be used, to a limited extent, for some good purpose, and I am not immune to their pleasures, even their vicious pleasures. But we don't limit them. We never turn the damn things off. Now, the latest advertising gimmick is to put giant TV screens into health clubs and airports, alternating the soft-sell "entertainment" segments with hard-sell commercials. Ted Turner has even seduced schools into accepting his broadcasts, and the only complaints come typically from anti-capitalist leftists. Poor Ezra Pound, stuck in his cage outside of Pisa, wrote some of the best verse of his later career, but transferred to the warm and dry St. Elizabeth's loony bin, he turned out virtually nothing worth reading. Perhaps it had something to do with the television blasting outside his room.

Succubi, nightmares, simulacra. Even the lady of Shalott was "half sick of shadows." We delight in them and would not trade them in for reality, even if we could. The schools, as Dewey knew, made sure of that. By teaching nothing of grammar, literature, history, or theology, American schools—public, private, and parochial—see to it that we grow up knowing nothing of the world. Instead, we are trapped within a towering prison of images and abstractions, and a man might spend his life butting with his head and never crack through the deadening wall of lies. We are like the villains of old, so hardened in our ways that we cannot recognize virtue or beauty when we see it. . . .

Of all the 20th-century prophets who predicted doom for our botched civilization, it was Aldous Huxley who saw most clearly. In *Nineteen Eighty-Four* George Orwell looked at the surface symptoms of political repression and official propaganda that characterized Nazi Germany and Stalinist Russia, and extrapolated. The Soviets played Orwell's game for 70 years, and it didn't work. Huxley, on the other hand, looked closer to home in Britain and America and saw the future in California—a deracinated culture based on hedonism, mood elevators, and compulsory consumption of useless articles that keep the world economy going. The control exerted by Huxley's world-state over its people extends from genetically engineered babies raised in government nurseries and schooled in classes on "elementary sex and elementary class consciousness" to a lifetime of assigned duties, obligatory pleasures, ending in euthanasia for the public good. It is a happy-talking New World Order, where the greatest enemy of the regime would be a Shakespeare-reading savage, capable of love and hate.

The totalitarian states of the 30's and 40's were, as Huxley realized, too crude and negative in their methods: "The most important Manhattan projects of the future will be vast government-sponsored inquiries into what the politicians and the participating scientists will call 'the problem of happiness'—in other words, the problem of making people love their servitude."

Huxley published *Brave New World* in 1932 and set the tale six centuries into the future. In 1946, in the foreword to a new edition, he revised his timetable: "Today it seems quite possible that the horrors may be upon us within a single century." There were only two likely alternatives, he suggested, either "a number of national, militarized totalitarianisms" threatening to blow up the world or else "one supra-national totalitarianism, called into existence by the social chaos resulting from rapid technological progress . . . and developing under the need for efficiency and stability, into the welfare-tyranny of Utopia." Forty-five years later, we know it is the latter scenario that will be played out, perhaps by the first years of the next millennium. In a similar vein, Pound told his mother, "the art of letters will come to an end before A.D. 2000." If Pound and Huxley were both correct, as I believe they were, then we can take comfort in this reflection: Come the millennium, there will be few people around capable of reading *Brave New World* or any other book produced by the lost civilization. c

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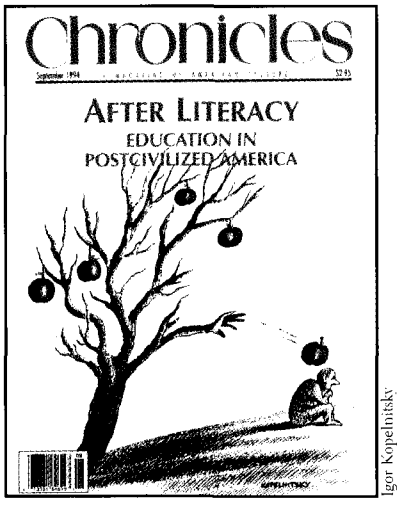
To Hell With Culture

by John Lukacs



Igor Kopelnitsky

"The corruption of man," Emerson wrote, "is followed by the corruption of language." The reverse is true, and a century later Georges Bernanos had it right: "The worst, the most corrupting lies are problems wrongly stated." How pertinent this is about so many matters present, including the use of the word *culture*. My conservative friends now say that with the monstrous perils of communism gone, the main problems of this country are cultural. They mean multiculturalism, and other allied matters, too: the counterculture, rap culture, pop culture, media culture, the cultural elite, the culture of violence, etc., etc. They mean well (at least some of them do), but their language is wrong and, consequently, so is their thinking. When people speak of "multiculturalism," what they really mean is multicivilization, whose proponents want the coexistence of altogether different civilizations within the same country. Only: What kind of coexistence? The same goes for the other terms, which are even more meaningless. Think, for instance, of that current cliché: "the culture of violence." It is not *violence* that threatens us; it is the prevalence of *savagery*. It is not the state of *culture* that we should lament; it is the breakdown of *civilization*. This is not a semantic argument. Can one speak of a civilization of violence (or of savagery)? No, because the opposite of civilization is barbarism, whereas the opposite of culture is . . . well, nature.

. . . The ancients had no word for culture. They had other words: civic and civility, which . . . were the antitheses of barbarity and barbarism. "Culture" . . . meant cultivation. For a long time it was inseparable from agriculture; it was applied metaphorically to the cultivation of minds. "Civilize," in English, appears first in 1601: "to make civil; to bring out of a state of barbarism; to instruct in the arts of life; to enlighten and refine." For the present idea of "culture" we may thank the Germans. They developed the idea that *Kultur* was higher than *Zivilisation*. German heavy thinkers such as Spengler hammered away at this: Civilization is mechanical (and artificial); culture is spiritual (and organic). He worked on his *Decline of the West* during World War I, when many Germans were convincing themselves that they were a *Kulturvolk*, a people of culture, superior to a nation of shopkeepers, the English, who were only civilized. Where this idea got the Germans we know, or ought to know. Where this notion has got us at the end of the 20th century—and especially in America—we ought to think about.

A hundred years ago, intellectuals (a distinct group of people beginning to form then) were inclined to accept the superiority of culture over civilization, for more reasons than we do now. Matthew Arnold suggested it powerfully in "Dover Beach." What he could not yet see was the evolution—or the devolution—of intellectuals, convinced as the latter were that the superiority of culture over civilization was represented by their superiority over the philistines. Yet we can see that intellectuals may become, or indeed be, even less civilized than are philistines. (Especially when intellectuals promote all kinds of barbarisms of their own.) In any event, American intellectuals—perhaps particularly because of their feeling of isolation from other Americans—were especially inclined to accept and propagate this culture-civilization antithesis: Yes, American civilization may have been the most advanced in the world when it came to housing, heating, plumbing, transporting, producing; but American culture had yet to catch up. Well, American civilization is no longer the most advanced in the world, while—or, perhaps, because—American culture *has* caught up. Intellectuals have often lamented the inadequacy of Amer-

John Lukacs is an historian and author, most recently, of Five Days in London: May1940 *(Yale University Press). A longer version of this article first appeared in the September 1994 issue.*

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ican culture, while they surely knew how to profit from American civilization. Among other things, they wished that there were more Greenwich Villages in this country. Well, now there are—sordid enclaves of barbarism, most of them. . . .

The signs of the breakdown of American civilization are all around us. Their illustration would require an encyclopedic jeremiad. More and more people, all kinds of people, recognize what is going on. Sensitive people already exist whose experiences lead them to use the proper term—as, for example, James Prothero, a public-school teacher in Southern California, in a recent article in the *New Oxford Review*: "Civilization has ceased to exist in the urban area around my high school." . . .

Unlike in the case of Greece or Rome, the barbarians are not at the gate (though some of them *are* pouring through). They are inside, and I do not only mean those coming up from the subway. Readers may now suppose that I am thinking only, or mostly, of blacks. I am not. The barbarism burgeoning across this country has been propagated by the culture of whites, and I do *not* mean slavery. That is long gone. What are not gone are movies, television, talk radio, books, magazines, music, art—yes, art—propagating juvenility, irresponsibility, loudness, corrupt language, sexual prowess, physical brutality, and pornography and leading to a widespread decay not only of "values" and of standards of behavior but of imagination. The worst barbarian talk I have ever listened to was the self-centered, endless monologue of an Italian-American taxi driver from Brooklyn to Manhattan. In 1870, William Dean Howells welcomed Italians to America: "a race that is immemorially civilized." "Scratch the mask of a modern Italian," he wrote, "and you will find a polite pagan." The Irish were the barbarians: "Scrape one of these Yankeefied Celts and you'll find a savage." He could not have been more wrong. He *may* have been right about those poor Italian immigrants 100 years ago. What American crowd culture has made some of their descendants into is another story.

Neither rock nor porn was invented by blacks. (Nor were blues and jazz: Those were fusions of black musical talent and sensitivity with Anglo-Saxon forms of harmony and modern syncopation, at a time when the ambition of American blacks amounted to more than emulation of whites, when their ambition was to acquire their rightful place within an American civilization.) The pictorial and popular culture that celebrates physicality, sexuality, juvenility, self-indulgence, and primitiveness, whether in high art or low (including actors and singers and rock groups who call themselves "conservatives" or who are taken up enthusiastically by "conservatives") are produced and represented and consumed by whites. (Think only of the happiness on Richard Nixon's face when he had the privileged moment of welcoming Elvis Presley in the Oval Office.) So are advertisements produced by whites, including their half-naked and stubble-faced *vitelloni*. . . . When primitiveness is prized, need one be surprised that blacks prove to be good at it and that whites are afraid of them in the streets—which, of course, is the obverse of what white "racism" is supposed to be?

There is plenty of "culture" thrown at children in our schools, but very little of civilization. We now have hordes of young people to whom not only the notions but the very words "civilization" and "civilized" are hardly known—at a time when more people mouth the word "culture" than ever before. And this has a special pertinence to the United States, where our forefathers were convinced of their duty to bring civilization to the New World—a greater task even than its preservation of the Old. . . .

When a civilization functions, so do its public institutions. A hundred years ago, American public schools, public hospitals, etc., were among the best in the world. Since that time the very sense of what is "public" has decayed: Our public schools, public hospitals, public transportation are avoided and shunned by many people. But at least in one important respect there is no difference between those public schools where the young maim and occasionally murder each other and the most expensive of private institutions. *All* American schools are hardly more than custodial institutions now—to keep young people off the streets and away from home, and not only in the event that both of their parents are at work. . . . Whether in an inner-city school or at Harvard, the young are not taught civilization. I do not mean the teaching of good manners—that disappeared some time ago. (Though Goethe was right: There are no manners which do not have a moral foundation somewhere.) Nor do I mean the older American public-school practice of teaching good citizenship. I mean a respect for life, for an orderly life that is inseparable not only from a respect for learning but from a respect for one's provenance, for language, and for the ability to read, write, and listen. Almost half of our young now spend nearly *20 years* in schools, with the result that most of them cannot read and write and express themselves adequately.

This has something to do with the propaganda about the Information Explosion. ("Explosion," with its destructive connotation, is the *mot juste*.) There is a breakdown of communication, part and parcel of the breakdown of civilization, an information "culture" that has nothing to do with in-formation, for *that* requires listening. Since entire generations no longer know how to listen, we have this widening breakdown of communication (and, thus, of civility) between parents and children, husbands and wives, lovers, teachers and students, and so on. When "culture" can (as it already does) degenerate into mere entertainment, "civilization," too, can degenerate into mere telephoning.

Civilization includes paying attention to others. Rare that is now, particularly in the world of scholarship—or, as the cliché goes, in "the community of scholars." There is no such community. There is the old saw about the specialist who knows more and more about less and less. There was nothing very wrong with that. What we now have are academic bloviators who know less and less about more and more, while the majority of their colleagues read less and less and write (or, rather, process words) more and more. If that is culture, then the hell with it. Meanwhile, a professor who says something critical about a Mexican or a Chinese or a homosexual may be punished, having bucked multiculturalism. Another professor who engages in carnal commerce with his students has done nothing wrong. Such judgments are products of a progressively broadening "culture." They are also the products of advancing barbarism, not of civilization, as in sex education, which, too, has nothing to do with the advance of civilization. It is public instruction for mechanical and antiseptic, safe and sinless carnality, at a time when one of the marks of a broken-down civilization is the decay of privacy—and of a sense of sin (that sense of sin without which sex tastes like egg without salt).

Clothes do not make the man, or woman, but they do illustrate many things. In the past young people looked forward to the day when they could acquire and wear the clothes (together with other rights and privileges) of adults. Now the more

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"progressive" the professor the more he apes the clothes, habits, words, and sounds of the young. Young men no longer emulate mature men; but since it is in the nature of youth to emulate, they emulate the customs and the clothes of the barbarians they see, often through their determined cult of ugliness. In sum, there is a culture of juvenility, while there is no such thing as a juvenile civilization. There cannot be. Civilization calls for maturity, and our culture now is largely puerile—consider only that the majority of movies and records are made for teenage consumers. This kind of cultural rot has pervaded the national economy—the so-called material basis of our society. As reported in the *New York Times* last year, four of the five most successful stocks of the previous six years were Coca-Cola, Pepsico, Motorola, and Disney, producers and promoters of juvenile slurping and of puerile entertainment, i.e., Fizz, i.e., the Youth Culture. Three of the principal "losers" were IBM, Westinghouse, and Ford. This tells us something about where not only American culture but American industry is going, or not going. (Eight months later I read a column in the *Times* by William Safire, who, a proponent of "free enterprise," attacked those who object to turning the Virginia battlefields of the Civil War into a great Disney theme park and entertainment center. Safire is a Republican, a "conservative," and a self-proclaimed "Man of the Right.") Civilization means the restriction of many a "freedom." When will our newfangled—and many of the not-so-newfangled—"conservatives" and "libertarians" ever learn? . . .

It is the—often masochistic—contempt of civilized man that marks much of "modern" culture in the 20th century. I will not go so far as to say that Picasso or Klee or Le Corbusier—and, yes, Frank Lloyd Wright—were neobarbarians (though the case can and will one day be made), even preceding John Cage or Jackson Pollock or the ghoulish Warhol and that example of an oxymoron, the Museum of Primitive Art; they were surely opponents not of culture but of civilization. (I read that Woody Allen is a "cultural icon." Perhaps, but is he an emblem of civilization?)

We live in a society where the term "middle class" has lost all of its meaning, since nearly everybody is "middle class" in one way or another, including criminals, who are no longer a recognizable or definable stratum of the population. The crime rate rises rapidly, yet the proportion of professional criminals, professional burglars, professional robbers, professional prostitutes actually decreases. Because of the breakdown of civilization, that once grey area, or no-man's-land, between the habitual (and recognizable) criminal and the common citizen has now spilled over into vast areas of society, and I am not even thinking of the criminality of drug abusers. I am thinking of the awful fact—and it is a fact—that large numbers of part-time burglars and part-time robbers and part-time prostitutes now regard themselves, and are not infrequently regarded by others, as more or less normal and (to alarmingly many people) as more or less acceptable citizens. Why not, since prototypes of many of them are so portrayed in movies, television, etc.? Within that enormous bubble of a national middle class there is now a wide scatteration of barbarians; and the sense of community, which is inseparable from the relations of the sexes (the sexual act in itself meaning the temporary formation of a community of two), has changed. Now it is men and women not of the same "class" but of the same "culture" that seek each other out, which is an interesting and even intriguing development, though it has little to do with civilization, the decay of which has now seeped down deep enough to involve the relations of the sexes. For meanwhile, the insistence on women's rights proceeds apace with the loss of respect for them, which is extremely damaging to civilization, since women are the natural creators and protectors not only of their young but of the virtues of domesticity and of privacy.

The American ideal of government includes the protection of domesticity and privacy through the maintenance of enough law and order to guarantee the safety of citizens so that they can prosper freely. But we have long forgotten that it is more difficult to be free than not to be free. *That* depends on civilization. In 1848 Colonel Richard B. Mason drafted a proclamation to the inhabitants of California, after a treaty had ceded it to the United States from Mexico. The United States was bringing civilization to California, with a stable government administering equal justice. "The arts and sciences will flourish, and the labor of the agriculturist, guided by the lamp of learning, will stimulate the earth to the most beautiful production." Well, civilization in California, as well as in the United States government, is in plenty of trouble now, not the least because of productions of "culture," not agriculture. Meanwhile "the arts and sciences" have become dependent on the government, with plenty of trouble there, too, because of the absence of cultural "standards." But this is not only a problem of standards; it is a practical one. Should government promote "culture" at all? That is at least arguable. What is not arguable is that government must protect civilization. When it fails to do so, government, as we know it, dissolves, with first anarchy and then barbaric tyranny succeeding it.

It is possible to exaggerate the virtues of civilization. It is possible to exaggerate the virtues of Babbitts, but the idea of Babbitt is now at least two generations behind us. Yes, there were too many Babbitts in this country at the time of Sinclair Lewis and Calvin Coolidge. But this was a powerful civilization then, with ample and varied opportunities for the tending of culture, when even the Babbitts, innocents as Sinclair Lewis described them, were made to pay some respect to culture, usually through the insistence of their wives. The yuppies are the grandchildren of the Babbitts; they are not innocent; they are "culture-oriented," except that theirs is a movie culture. The *New Yorker*, founded during the Babbitt era, was supposed to have proclaimed that its readership would not include old ladies in Dubuque. Well, for some years now the last readers of the old *New Yorker*, the remnant members of civilization, the true American *Kulturträgerinnen* were, and still are, a few old ladies in places such as Dubuque, while the *New Yorker* has become a soft-porn *Vanity Fair*, with a few culture cookies thrown in, but just about devoid of civilization, and with an emphatic presence of what its editor thinks is a tony barbarism.

I read that Miss Susan Sontag has appeared in Sarajevo, arranging a performance there of *Waiting for Godot*. What endangers the lives of people there is a breakdown of civilization, not of culture; but that is not my point. I respect the courage of her impulse; but I question the clarity of her purpose. When the Papuans will again practice cannibalism—inspired by what they have seen of it on American television—will their victims be Waiting for Sontag? We face something new in the long history of mankind. One can have culture without civilization. The progressive notion of the great chain of evolution—from primitiveness to civilization to culture—has become laughable.

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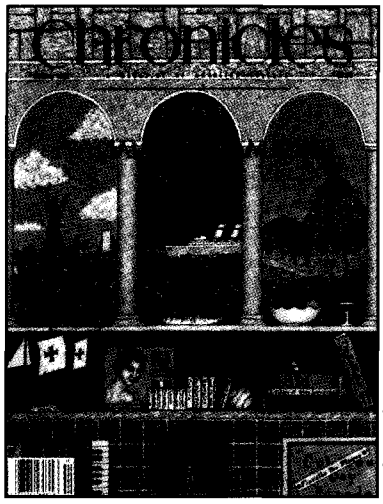
Crime Story

The Godfather as Political Metaphor



Stephen Anderson

"Behind every great fortune there is a crime," wrote Honoré de Balzac in a cynical sentiment that Mario Puzo chose as the epigraph of *The Godfather*. The line at once establishes the metaphor that dominates the book as well as the films and carries us into the essentially Machiavellian worldview that pervades them and to which most of its Italian-American characters subscribe. If "great fortunes" may be read as "human society" itself, then the history of crime becomes the history of society. *The Godfather* thus begins with not merely an analogy between the warfare and power struggles among criminals on the one hand, and the more normal civil relationships of legitimate society on the other, but also with an actual genealogy that traces the latter to their origins in force and fraud.

When Tom Hagen, *consigliore* to Don Vito Corleone, urges his boss and foster parent to accept the offer of a partnership with the Sicilian gangster Sollozzo for peddling drugs, he cites the power practices among real governments. If the Corleone family doesn't accept Sollozzo's bargain, Hagen argues, it will eventually be overwhelmed by the rival families. "It's just like countries," he says. "If they arm, we have to arm. If they become stronger economically, they become a threat to us." The *capo regime* Clemenza, explaining to Michael Corleone why a gang war is necessary, draws his own analogy with pre-World War II diplomacy, in a scene from both book and film. "These things have to happen every ten years or so," muses the corpulent killer. "You gotta stop them at the beginning. Like they shoulda stopped Hitler at Munich, they never should have let him get away with that, they were just asking for big trouble when they let him get away with that."

Yet the clearest such analogy between criminal and legitimate society is voiced by Michael Corleone himself in Part I of the film series. Explaining to his innocent fiancée Kay Adams why the work of his father, one of the most powerful gangsters in the country, is not as sinister as it seems, Michael tells her, "My father is no different than any other powerful man—any man who's responsible for other people, like a senator or a President." It is a comparison that Kay, daughter of a Baptist clergyman from New Hampshire, at once rejects. "Do you know how naive you sound?" she asks in the naively preachy way such women affect. "Senators and Presidents don't have men killed"—a line that, when the movie is shown in crowded American theaters, never fails to collapse the audience into derisive laughter.

If the premise of the novel is that the practices of normal or legitimate human society are analogous to those of criminal gangs, it is hardly surprising that the ghost of Machiavelli lurks throughout the novel and films, since the view of political power as essentially extralegal and extramoral is a fundamental theme of Machiavelli's political thought. . . . As in Machiavelli's thought, the Prince is not only above the law but the source of law and all social and political order, so in the Corleone universe, the Don is "responsible" for his family, a responsibility that authorizes him to do virtually anything except violate the obligations of the family bond. Michael's description of his father is not only Machiavellian but also virtually Nietzschean. "My father," Michael tells Kay,

> is a businessman trying to provide for his wife and children and those friends he might need someday in a time of trouble. He doesn't accept the rules of the society we live in because those rules would have condemned him to a life not suitable to a man like himself, a man of extraordinary force and character. What you have to understand is that he considers himself the equal of all those

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Samuel Francis is the Washington editor for Chronicles. *A longer version of this article first appeared in the October 1992 issue.*

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> great men like Presidents and Prime Ministers and Supreme Court Justices and Governors of the States. He refuses to live by rules set up by others, rules which condemn him to a defeated life. . . .

Moreover, Don Corleone's conversation as well as that of Michael and the other mafiosi is full of such homespun amoralisms of power-playing as Machiavelli would have treasured: "Keep your friends close, but your enemies closer"; "Revenge is a dish that tastes best when it is cold"; "a lawyer with his briefcase can steal more than a hundred men with guns"; and so on. They are just the sort of adages that fill the pages of Machiavelli's own works, and they are based on his assumption, which he shares with the Corleone family, that human nature does not change and therefore the natural laws by which human beings gain, use, and lose power remain permanent as well. And not only permanent but universal, so that they apply to the dynamics of Mafia intrigues as much as to the relationships among governments and between governors and governed. . . .

The role of religion in the novel and particularly in the films also illustrates Machiavellian themes. Religion for Puzo and Coppola appears to have two applications: as a mask behind which criminality hides and as a sop for women, children, and unmanly men. The irony of the title of "Godfather" itself points to the former use, as does the powerful climactic scene in Part I when Michael, literally becoming godfather to the child of his treacherous brother-in-law through the sacrament of baptism, renounces Satan and all his works while at the same moment his assassins cut down his enemies, making him the new Godfather on another level of meaning.

The use of religion as a Machiavellian mask is continued and intensified in Part II, where the repulsive Don Fannucci of the Black Hand ostentatiously offers a large cash donation to the Catholic Church and deplores the violence of a Punch and Judy show, even as the young Vito Corleone stalks him during a religious festival in the streets, using the celebration of the Mass as a distraction to kill Fannucci and initiate his own rise to power. Indeed, throughout both films there is not one religious ceremony or its social celebration that does not serve as a mask for crime: the wedding reception sequence that opens Part I, during which Don Corleone plans crimes on behalf of his retainers; the baptism scene at the end of the film as well as the funeral of Don Corleone, when the late Don's *capo regime* Tessio betrays Michael; the confirmation of Michael's own son in Nevada at the beginning of Part II; and the funeral of Michael's mother toward the end of Part II, when Michael gives the order for the murder of his brother Fredo.

Indeed, the only grown man in either the book or the films who takes religion at all seriously is Fredo himself, who, as Michael describes him, is "weak and stupid." Just before his own assassination in Part II, Fredo plans a fishing trip with Michael's son, and Fredo assures the boy that the way to catch a fish is to say a Hail Mary when he drops the line in the water. As Fredo sits in the boat repeating his prayers. Michael's gunman blows his brains out from behind.

The Godfather's general use of religion is virtually identical to the advice offered by Machiavelli to the Prince that "it is well to seem merciful, faithful, humane, sincere, religious, and also to be so; but you must have the mind so disposed that when it is needful to be otherwise you may be able to change to the opposite qualities," his belief, based on his reading of Roman religion, that "everything that tends to favor religion (even though it were believed to be false) should be received and availed of to strengthen it," and the saying of Cosimo de Medici, quoted by Machiavelli in his *History of Florence*, that "it required something more to direct a government than to play with a string of [rosary] beads." Rome itself occasionally is invoked in both book and films, as when Michael notes that Santino is scribbling down the names of men to be killed "as if he were some newly crowned Roman emperor."

Yet while the book proceeds from the premise that legitimate society and criminal gangs are analogous, it is at once evident that there is also a difference between them. In the course of his daughter's wedding reception, Don Corleone has the duty of meeting with and granting favors to many friends and relatives. The first of the men to approach him is an undertaker, Amerigo Bonasera, who tearfully complains that his daughter has been attacked. Bonasera is an immigrant and has tried all his life to be a good American, as his first name implies. He has obeyed the law and raised his daughter as a respectable young woman. Recently, she dated a young man, the son of a U.S. Senator, who tried to seduce her. When she rejected his advances, her date and a friend beat her savagely, sending her to the hospital and permanently disfiguring her features.

Being a good American, Bonasera went to the police and brought charges against his daughter's assailants. The scoundrels were convicted. But because of their fathers' political influence, the judge gave them only a suspended sentence, and they smirked at Bonasera as they left the courtroom. Now he comes to Don Corleone.

The Don's response conveys the principal expression of the moral code of the book and, even more, the films. Bonasera is not a friend of the Don. In all the years they have known each other, Bonasera avoided his company, never invited him to his house, never did him a favor or asked a favor of him. That's all right with the Don, but now, all of a sudden, Bonasera comes to him and asks him, in return for money, to commit murder. The Don refuses, his dignity wounded by Bonasera's tasteless insult.

Bonasera wanted to be an American, and he turned his back on his cultural heritage and his natural friends. "America," he moans, "has been good to me. I wanted to be a good citizen. I wanted my child to be American." And, of course, he wanted American justice, which is exactly what he got. "You never armed yourself with true friends," the Don tells him. "After all, the police guarded you, there were courts of law, you and yours could come to no harm. You did not need Don Corleone." But now, when the fake, purchased justice of America has failed him, to whom does he turn? Don Corleone's sarcastic advice is that Bonasera accept the judgment of the American court and give up his idea of revenge. "The judge has ruled. America has ruled," he says. The notion of vengeance for a wrong suffered by a family member is "not American." Best for Amerigo Bonasera to give it up.

America, as the Don describes it and as Bonasera has experienced it, does not behave like the Corleone family after all, and the differences between the two societies do not favor America. The differences between the two are precisely those between two kinds of social organization that sociologists describe as *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* respectively. *Gemeinschaft* refers to a kind of culture characteristic of primitive, agrarian, tribal societies, in which bonds of kinship, blood relationship,

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feudal ties, social hierarchy, deference, honor, and friendship are the norm. . . .

"Conversely" to *Gemeinschaft*, writes Robert Nisbet, "*Gesellschaft* . . . reflects the modernization of European society. . . . In pure *Gesellschaft*, which . . . is symbolized by the modern economic enterprise and the network of legal and moral relations in which it resides, we move to association that is no longer cast in the mold of either kinship or friendship. . . . The essence of *Gesellschaft* is rationality and calculation," an essence expressed in such modern organizations as corporations . . . and the formal, impersonal, legalistic, bureaucratic organization of the modern state.

It is a principal thesis of *The Godfather* that American society is a *Gesellschaft* at war with the *Gemeinschaft* inherent in the extended families of organized crime, and it is the claim of the novel and even more intensely of the films that the truly natural, legitimate, normal, and healthy type of society is that of the gangs. It is a claim buttressed by the savage depictions not only of the corrupt justice offered by America to Bonasera but also of virtually every character in both book and films who is not Sicilian and therefore is not part of the criminal *Gemeinschaft*: Kay Adams herself, the liberal WASP college girl who has no conception of the brutal forces that lie under and around her small social island; Jack Woltz, the vulgar and sex-obsessed Hollywood producer; Captain McCluskey, the crooked Irish cop who is in the pay of Sollozzo; Moe Greene, the Las Vegas gangster based on Bugsy Siegel; and in Part II of the film series, Nevada Senator Pat Geary and Hyman Roth, a fictionalized version of the late Meyer Lansky. Roth indeed is the most articulate and attractive of these representatives of the American *Gesellschaft*, and except for Kay, who is merely a child, most of them share certain characteristics. All of them are motivated mainly by avarice, and the cash bond is the only one they acknowledge or understand. Most also lack self-control; they lose their tempers unnecessarily and insult and try to cheat men with whom they want to do business, and some are slaves to sexual lusts that the prudish Don Corleone considers *infamia*. Lacking the natural bonds of *Gemeinschaft* through strong family attachments, the characters who represent *Gesellschaft* are bound only by their personal appetites, and it is through their appetites—greed, anger, lust, obsession with revenge served not cold but piping hot—that they usually meet destruction.

By contrast the *Gemeinschaft* of the Corleone family is embodied in Don Corleone himself, well-known for his humility, his caution, and his devotion to family. "A man who never spends time with his family can never be a real man," he tells his godson, Johnny Fontane, who has been unmanned by Hollywood *Gesellschaft*, but the remark is really addressed to his real son Santino, who is preoccupied with sex. "Even the King of Italy didn't dare to meddle with the relationship of husband and wife," the Don tells his own daughter when she complains that her husband is beating her. Outside the bond of family and friendship, outside the *Gemeinschaft*, Don Corleone believes, man cannot be man, and men who put their trust in the contrary type, represented by the American *Gesellschaft*, have ceased to be fully human and lack the *virtù* that Machiavelli commends. "You can act like a man," the Don roars at Fontane when the singer weeps and whines in despair about his misfortunes.

These are beliefs deeply shared by Michael Corleone himself, though not at the beginning of the novel, when, telling Kay about his family, he says, "That's my family, Kay. It's not me." Michael enlisted in the Marines in World War II, despite his father's arrangement of a draft deferment for him, to show his rejection of his family and his heritage, and his ambition to go to law school and marry Kay show his aspiration, the same as Bonasera's, to melt into the American pot. Yet blood will tell. The attempted murder of his father and the attack on his family draw Michael naturally back to his roots, and his exile in Sicily completes his assimilation into the *Gemeinschaft* and the ethnic heritage he had rejected. . . .

A large part of the conflict in Part II revolves around the antagonism between *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* within and without the family. There is a dual conflict, one between the Corleone family and the *Gesellschaft* syndicate led by the greedy and treacherous gangster Hyman Roth, and a second between the forces of corruption within the Corleone family itself. The logic of Michael's power dictates that he do business with Roth and make tactical sacrifices of the interests of his subordinates, mainly his aging lieutenant Frankie Pentangeli, who is the voice of pure *Gemeinschaft*. Pentangeli's complaint is that Michael is putting the interests of "that Jew in Miami" over those of "your own blood" and that Roth and his allies are avaricious and untrustworthy, recruiting "spics" and "niggers" instead of good Sicilian boys to run the rackets in New York. . . . The picture Pentangeli paints of the Roth gang and its activities and procedures is one of *Gesellschaft*—an organization devoted purely to material acquisition and sensory gratification through rational, calculative enterprise, an organization contemptuous of the traditional bonds of *Gemeinschaft* in the forms of the deference, manners, and ethnic and kinship loyalties that characterized the Corleone family in the past. Roth's gang is multiethnic, and his *consigliore* is a Sicilian, Johnny Ola.

But despite Pentangeli's complaint, it is actually Michael himself who is desperately trying to preserve the Corleone family, and it is his tragedy that the process of modernization by which *Gesellschaft* invades and corrupts the Corleones is irresistible. His sister Connie has virtually deserted her own family and seeks only money from Michael. His brother Fredo is seduced by Roth and Johnny Ola into betraying Michael and jeopardizing his life. His wife Kay aborts their unborn child in what is an act of war against the family itself. Troubled by the crumbling of his family, Michael asks his mother, the widowed Mama Corleone, "by being strong for his family, could Pop lose it?" To the old woman, still immersed in *Gemeinschaft*, the question is not even meaningful. "But you can never lose your family," she answers. "Times are changing," Michael replies.

Michael's tragedy is precisely that he is strong for his family and tries to arrest the rot, an effort that meets with only hatred and betrayal from family members who insist on putting their own gratification above that of the family. "He said there was something in it for me," whines Fredo when Michael demands to know why he collaborated with Johnny Ola. The contrast with the *Gesellschaft* of Hyman Roth is powerfully clear when Roth angrily explains why Michael's questions about Roth's attempted killing of Frank Pentangeli are out of line. Roth reminds Michael of Moe Greene, a man whom, "as much as anyone," Roth loved as a friend, and when "someone" (namely, Michael) ordered Greene killed, Roth says, "I never asked who gave the order—because this is the business we've chosen." To Roth, crime is merely business, a purely acquisitive and calcu-

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lative activity, that ought to be immune to the sentiment and bonds of honor imported by Michael. To Michael, however, attacks on him, his family, and his dependents must be avenged, as was the case also with his father, who returned to Sicily some forty years after the murder of his own family to take vengeance on the Mafia Don who killed them.

. . . Only Roth's death will confirm Michael's victory and remove a still dangerous enemy. Fredo is a living liability and is too stupid and weak to be trusted under any circumstances. Pentangeli knows too much and has been prevented from incriminating Michael only by pressure against his brother; he too is too dangerous to be allowed to live. In each case, Michael's insistence on their executions is, from the point of view of the Corleone power interests and from that of the moral code of the *Gemeinschaft*, logically essential and morally unobjectionable. The bloodbath and Michael's isolation at the end of Part II are confirmations not of the corruption and arrogance of power but of the inexorable logic of power—only by being strong for his family could Michael hope to preserve his family, but by being strong for it, he destroyed it. That was his tragedy, as it is the tragedy of human society. Power is not only necessary to the functioning of society, as Machiavelli taught; it also possesses a relentless logic that eventually eats up itself as it irresistibly converts *Gemeinschaft* into *Gesellschaft* and turns the consensual and deferential social bonds of the former into the coercive commands and cash relationships of modernity.

Indeed, the seeds of *Gesellschaft* and its corruption are already present in the book and Part I. For all of Vito Corleone's invocations of the sacred obligations of family and friendship, by the end of the novel virtually the whole family has been killed through treachery. Carlo Rizzi shamelessly cheats on and beats his wife, Connie Corleone, and sets up the murder of his brother-in-law Santino. Santino also cheats on his wife, and Fredo in the book sides with Moe Greene against Michael. Santino is manipulated into being set up for assassination precisely because he takes the family too seriously. He wants vengeance for the attack on his father and Carlo's beating of his sister, and he rushes blindly into the trap contrived for him. When Tessio is led off to execution for his own betrayal of the family, he tells Hagen to assure Michael his treason was nothing personal. "Tell Mike it was only business; I always liked him."

Ultimately, as Michael knows, it is always "only business"; the temptations of *Gesellschaft* and modernization, power, business, money, and survival are always stronger than the bonds of *Gemeinschaft*, honor, loyalty, and family. When Tessio's treachery is discovered, Hagen tells Michael he was surprised; he always thought it would have been Clemenza who betrayed him. No, says Michael, "Tessio was always smarter." It is not smart to put your faith in *Gemeinschaft* because it does not last. "All our people are businessmen," Michael tells Hagen in Part II. "Their loyalties are based on that."

Ultimately, then, the apparent distinction between the *Gemeinschaft* symbolized by the family and the *Gesellschaft* of modernity symbolized by normal or legitimate American society breaks down, and perhaps it is Michael who is naive after all, with the naiveté of the tragic hero who trusts in something that is foreign to the nature of man. For all the contrast between legitimate and criminal society, at last, when the final mask is torn off, there is no difference at all; the Corleone family is based on fraud as well as force, and it does indeed melt into and become indistinguishable from America.

The Godfather offers a powerfully pessimistic (some might even say cynical) view of man and society that slaps in the face the pleasanter views characteristic of modernist ideologies drawn from the doctrine of progress and especially the favorite American myth that through assimilation into the institutional environment offered by the democratic capitalism of the American *Gesellschaft*, human beings can be perfected and force and fraud as enduring and omnipresent elements of social existence can be escaped. . . . Neither *Gemeinschaft* nor *Gesellschaft* offer any hope of a secular salvation, any safe resolution of man's fate, and the Machiavellian portrayal of religion in both book and films seems to hold out little hope of any other kind of salvation either.

But not quite. When Kay marries Michael, she notices that Mama Corleone, a very minor character in the book, goes to church everyday. The Protestant Kay asks her why she does so. "'I go for my husband,' she pointed down toward the floor, 'so he don't go down there.' She paused. 'I say prayers for his soul every day so he go up there.'" It is one of only two passages in either the book or the first two films that suggests the utility of religion for something other than a mask as well as one of the few passages that hints at the reality of the evil of Don Corleone, though it also suggests the secular necessity of men like him and Michael. Mama Corleone knows full well what her husband is, and she also knows she can do nothing to change him or the dependence of her world on him, and at his death in Part I, the old Don is playing with his grandson by putting an orange peel in his mouth and pretending to be a monster, a game that reveals at last another and equally true dimension of his character. . . .

Kay herself comes to perceive the evil of the reality her husband represents at the end of the book and of Part I of the films and also to recognize and accept it in the same way as the old Mrs. Corleone. Seeing Michael being saluted by his vassals as the new Don, what occurs to Kay is the metaphor of Rome, and thereby she herself confirms the truth of the parallel between normal and criminal society.

> Kay could see how Michael stood to receive their homage. He reminded her of statues in Rome, statues of those Roman emperors of antiquity, who, by divine right, held the power of life and death over their fellow men. One hand was on his hip, the profile of his face showed a cold proud power, his body was carelessly, arrogantly at ease, weight resting on one foot slightly behind the other.

And hence, the other, and final, scene of the book that suggests that religion has a meaning other than as a mask. The book concludes with Kay, having converted to Catholicism after she learns of her husband's role in the murder of Carlo Rizzi and of the true nature of his "business," in church at Mass, "saying the necessary prayers for the soul of Michael Corleone." If Michael is the new Don, Kay, representing the normal or legitimate society of America, has become the new Madonna Corleone, accepting the reality of what her husband represents and recognizing in her "necessary prayers" the dreadful duality of the evil that men do and the equally dreadful necessity for even such innocent children of the American *Gesellschaft* as Kay Adams to see it, to accept their dependence on it, to unite with it, and finally to pray for those who act out the tragedy it demands.

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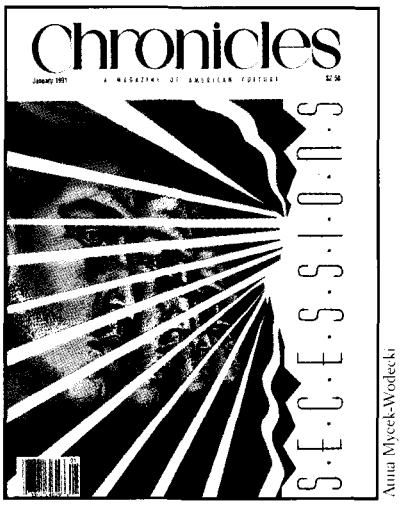
New York vs. New York

by Bill Kauffman

"The feeling between this city and the hayseeds . . . is every bit as bitter as the feelings between the North and South before the War. . . . Why, I know a lot of men in my district who would like nothin' better than to go out gunnin' for hayseeds."
—George Washington Plunkitt
Tammany Hall, 1905



Plunkitt lived in the days before garbage scows, Tawana Brawley, Nelson Rockefeller, radioactive waste, and the decimation of local government. In the Upstate-Downstate marriage, Plunkitt's was the Era of Good Feelings.

Sectional enmity in New York used to be served with a wink and a smile. They were slickers, we were appleknockers; they were swells, we were yokels. Stanley Walker of the *New York Herald Tribune* could call Upstaters "earthbound clodhoppers, with inferiority complexes dating from a boyhood passed in shoveling out the barnyard," and no great offense was taken.

Upstaters knew their history back then; every schoolchild could recite the glories of his region. We gave birth to women's suffrage, the Liberty Party, Mormonism, spiritualism, Anti-Masonry, and the Oneida community. Mantics and kooks and visionaries—Jemima Wilkinson and the Fox Sisters and Frederick Douglass—took root in our soil. Shanty Irishmen built the Erie Canal; Gerritt Smith bought John Brown his guns.

At the great junctures in American history, Upstate had acted nobly, Downstate ignobly. Our patriots consecrated the Revolution with blood, while Tories and cowards sought haven in Manhattan. After the war, Downstate money interests rammed the new Constitution through, over the protests of the farmers and artisans who had shouldered the muskets. (The rustics possessed a "zeal for liberty," shuddered Federalist Richard Morris.)

The marvelous idea of divorce—of the two New Yorks—was first advanced at our ratifying convention in 1788. Ten states had already assented to the Constitution, but New York, led by the "Rough Hewer," shoemaker's apprentice Abraham Yates, Jr., held out. Downstate Federalists resorted to threat: If New York did not ratify, its largest city would split off and join the Union anyway. To our everlasting regret, several Upstate delegates caved in, and we entered the United States as one.

By 1861, the City had turned disunionist. Unwilling to offend "our aggrieved brethren of the slave states," doughface Mayor Fernando Wood, a Breckinridge man, proposed to take New York City out of New York State—and the United States—and declare independence. No principle was involved, just good old filthy lucre: Wood wanted to preserve the Southern trade. Typically, New York City hoped to profit from war while avoiding the fighting.

Wood's trial balloon was punctured, and over the next century not even William Randolph Hearst could set it aloft. Upstate blocked Hearst from the governorship, as it did Ed Koch in 1982, after hizzoner imprudently told *Playboy*: "This rural America thing—I'm telling you, it's a joke." Behind the pastoral façade lurked a truly nightmarish reality, almost David Lynchian: "wasting time in a pickup truck when you have to drive 20 miles to buy a gingham dress or a Sears, Roebuck suit."

Not exactly Jackie Mason, but still, a pretty harmless jest. Rural York, alas, had lost its sense of humor. We rejected Koch for that agrarian knight, Mario Cuomo.

Governor Cuomo's speechwriters have since beaten the "family of New York" trope into tripe. How is an Elba onion farmer kin to Jackie Onassis or the Reverend Al Sharpton or Billy Joel? David Leavitt, Manhattan's golden boy of letters (and an NEA grantee, natch), looks beyond the Hudson and sees "a scrubbed, manicured neighborhood. . . . The music is by Wayne Newton, the paintings are by Norman Rockwell, and sex takes place only between married men and women in beds at night."

The details are all wrong, of course, except maybe for Norman Rockwell and the bed, but that's to be expected of Leavitt, who knows less about the real America than I do about the nightlife of subsidized Bohemians and trust-fund trash. No

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Bill Kauffman, born in the cradle of Anti-Masonry, is author of the novel Every Man a King. *This article first appeared in the January 1991 issue.*

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matter. This is how Greenwich Village sees us, and this is why some sharp Upstate pol, maybe a demagogue and maybe not, will one day tap into the populist potential and try to set this house on fire. Our preamble to battle could come from William Jennings Bryan's Cross of Gold speech: "Our war is not a war of conquest. We are fighting in the defense of our homes, our families, and posterity. We have petitioned, and our petitions have been disregarded; we have begged, and they have mocked when our calamity came. We beg no longer; we petition no more. We defy them."

The train of abuses and usurpations snakes into eternity. We are taxed to subsidize their squalid subway system, their welfare industry, and those artistic expressions deemed pleasing by culture czar Kitty Carlisle. (Perhaps Annie Sprinkle playing the home version of *To Tell the Truth*?) Rural and working-class folks are harassed by an array of gun laws, 55 m.p.h. paternalism, and extortionate regressive levies on everything from fishing to foodstuffs.

The vitality is gone up here; no ferment, no foment, no nothing. Or so it appeared to Governor Cuomo, who seriously overplayed his hand and is facing an incipient rural rebellion.

In 1989, the governor determined to locate a low-level nuclear waste dump in rural, money-poor Allegany or Cortland County. Most of New York's waste is generated in Westchester County and around the City, but, well, you know: mustn't rouse the righteous dander of Joseph Papp, and E.L. Doctorow and Christie Brinkley. It'd be so much easier to steal farmland in our godforsaken region. The *Times* won't make a peep.

Imagine Cuomo's surprise when his likeness was hung in effigy across Western New York. Protesters—not shaggy college kids but natives, many with roots generations deep—have kept state inspectors off the threatened property. Raucous rallies recall Whiskey Rebels and Daniel Shays. Guitar slingers who'd take Hank Williams, Jr., over Joan Baez any day sing rousing songs. Top of the pops: "Allegany County is full of nasty boys / Shotguns is their favorite toys."

The anti-nuke firestorm is whipping up a great new cloud of anti-urbanism. Most Upstaters, at least in my neck of the woods, have never even been to New York City. Nevertheless, as Norman Mailer has said, "the good farmers and small-town workers of New York State rather detest us." And why not? You send your murderers and howling Son of Sam lunatics to Attica, and now you want to bury your nuclear waste in our woodlands. Like a boorish suitor who has already been to the mountaintop, you don't even flatter us into submission. You just seize the land by eminent domain, all the while crowing about how Green thou art. (The upper-middle-class environmentalist groups, so exercised over plastic trash bags and snowmobiles, are shamefully silent on the rape of Allegany. Might they want plum appointments in the Cuomo administration of 1993?)

The anti-Cuomo, anti-NYC sentiment is diffuse and unchanneled. It has no public outlet. The parties, the chain papers, the TV and radio stations are owned by Manhattan corporations: The New York establishment really is one big happy family. Agrarian and small-town dissent embarrasses Upstate elites, who have been to college and met people from all over the world and learned never to trust their own judgment or those of undegreed, untraveled neighbors.

This past November, the Republicans ran for governor a Manhattan millionaire economist named Pierre Rinfret, chosen for his bulging purse. Rinfret yammered about the death penalty and the fool drug war, as though serial killers and white powder are what ails us. He called his Upstate campaign trips "a waste of cash." He squandered the rural vote with a remarkable proposal that counties bid for the privilege of *not* hosting waste dumps—thus ensuring that our poorest, most verdurous, least populated shires would become the Metropolis's latrine. Westchester would go scot-free, while Allegany would be forever despoiled. Despairing Yorkers cried that the Cuomo-Rinfret contest proved that the system no longer works, though I suspect it proved just the opposite: the system by which Cities and Money keep us in vassalage works all too well.

So what? some of my landmen say. Subjection is inevitable. David Harum, the cracker-barrel Yorker of a 19th-century regional novel, philosophized, "A reasonable amount of fleas is good for a dog—they keep him f'm broodin' on bein' a dog."

The problem is, Upstate has become a miserable whipped cur. We haven't elected one of our own governors since 1920. (The cousin-marrier of Hyde Park doesn't count.) We last elected a senator in 1958. We last had a *candidate* for governor in 1954. Estonia has more influence in Moscow than we do in Albany. (At least they've let us keep our accents.)

As the republican ideal dims, We are becoming more like Them. Henry Clune's fine unknown novel *Six O'Clock Casual* (1960) describes an Upstate hamlet in which the prominent men gleefully loot their patrimony. A native daughter, returned from New York City, discovers nothing but sickness and cupidity in her hometown. At novel's end, she again flees to the city, which is at least frank in its corruption.

Mr. Clune will turn 101 in February, and for all his pessimism he remains in the village of Scottsville, just outside of Rochester. He tried New York City once or twice, but opted to cultivate a literary career in hardscrabble local ground. He explained: "I longed for Main Street and the friendly nod, the warm greeting, the buttonholing by this, that, and the other passer-by. I wanted to be where I knew the folks. . . . Rochester becomes, not the small center around which the world revolves, but almost the world itself."

Clune is sadly unlaureled, but he has lived a life richer than a thousand PEN benefits. We are a "culturally undernourished hinterland," according to Norman Mailer, and while Upstaters do exhibit a deplorable ignorance of their heritage, I'll gladly pit Edmund Wilson against Alfred Kazin, William Kennedy against Jimmy Breslin, John Gardner against Philip Roth, Joyce Carol Oates against any *New Yorker* miniaturist, and, in the historical novelist category, Walter Edmonds against Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.

Face it: New York City has hit its cultural nadir. The magnet that once drew William Dean Howells now repels us with the subsidized juvenilia of Karen Finley. (And what does that say about the decline of their Midwest matrix?) Free spirits, Jack Kerouacs cruising jazz clubs, are long gone. The underground has a factitious, sham quality. New York City's two punk celebrities were typical: David Byrne was a RISDE brat and Joey Ramone has a rich psychiatrist mother. By contrast, Buffalo's best punk band, the Enemies, was led by a swimming-pool cleaner and a cabbie.

The dark-eyed poet of the 60's demimonde, Lou Reed, now finds Manhattan unlivable. "I've really got a lucky life," he sings, with "my writing, my motorcycle, and my wife." And his house in New Jersey. Rank and File, an incendiary cowpunk band out of Seattle by way of Austin, visited after-midnight NYC and didn't like it one bit:

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Did you ever see a sheep in a porkpie hat?
Ever seen a lemming dressed all in black?
You might have been there but I'll tell you just in case
Just take a walk down St. Mark's Place.

Rank and File were angry populists, probably harboring all sorts of phobias. The bumpkin bewildered by the din and pageantry of Gotham is a stock character in Upstate/Downstate literature. Stanley Walker, in his jocular 1935 essay, walked a mile in our shoes: "Every other citizen is either a pickpocket or a sybarite. . . . The City reeks with Jews, Catholics, atheists, communists, nudists, Republicans, Public Enemies, chow dogs, Rolls-Royces, and Heywood Broun."

The conceit is that anyone who bridles at Downstate imperialism is a rube, a racist, a redneck, an anti-Semite. What wonderful weapons with which to stifle debate: Submit, Upstater, or face the Hate Crime tribunal!

So where do we turn, O Lord, where do we turn? To Norman Mailer, of course, whose 1969 mayoral campaign is a fulgent star in our pitch black night.

"Power to the Neighborhoods!" was Mailer's slogan. He wanted to abolish the present city government and permit blocks, tracts, sections to manage their own affairs. SoHo, Harlem, Bensonhurst: each neighborhood would be responsible for its own welfare, trash pickup, policing, etc. He also wanted to cut Upstate loose, to end our "marriage of misery, incompatibility, and abominable old quarrels."

Mailer averred that he was to the left of the liberals and to the right of the conservatives: wisdom's place! He got clobbered, but not before diagnosing the modern malady: "The style of New York life has shifted since the Second World War (along with the rest of American cities) from a scene of local neighborhoods and personalities to a large dull impersonal style of life which deadens us with its architecture, its highways, its abstract welfare, and its bureaucratic reflex to look for government solutions which come into the city from without (and do not work) . . . Our condition is spiritless. We wait for abstract impersonal powers to save us, we despise the abstractness of those powers, we loathe ourselves for our own apathy." Has any candidate in postwar America been as eloquent?

Mailer's essay, "An Instrument for the City," reprinted in *Existential Errands*, is a brilliant and shamefully neglected decentralist manifesto. If New Yorkers had listened to Mailer, Paul Goodman, and Dorothy Day instead of John Lindsay, Abe Beame, and Ed Koch, perhaps we'd be friends.

Two years later, Bella Abzug picked up the statehood ball. The floppy-hatted harridan—who had opposed the high-testosterone Mailer candidacy—raged against Upstate "appleknockers" who did not understand the historical inevitability of a centralized welfare state run by Manhattan social workers. Abzug's plan was poorly designed: She wanted an urban state, without the buffers of Long Island and Westchester. (We don't want 'em either!)

Yet Abzug struck a nerve. Ambitious pols who thought they were too urban, too Jewish, too black to win statewide elections hopped on the statehood train. Brooklyn borough president Sebastian Leone took Bella one step further and called for an independent Brooklyn, asserting, "We've lived too long in the shadow of Manhattan." The Buffalo City Council passed a "good riddance" resolution. Petitions were circulated to force a citywide referendum to authorize the drafting of a new constitution, the first step toward statehood. Liberal activists were reinvigorating the torpid American ideal of self-rule, and they were, justly, proud of themselves.

They were also naive. The hack city clerk rejected 20,000 of the 55,398 signatures they had collected. There would be no referendum. Governor Rockefeller and the *New York Times* proclaimed it a great triumph for unity, and secession died a prompt death.

(A similar fate will likely befall the separatist movement operating today on Staten Island. By far the smallest of New York's five boroughs, Staten Island gets stuck with 80 percent of the city's rubbish. "One man-one vote" rulings have nullified the borough's influence in city affairs, so fed-up islanders are crafting a charter for an independent City of Staten Island. The state legislature, dominated by antisecession slickers—why liberate your best garbage can?—will have the final say. Those who have ever depended on the kindness of politicians can predict the outcome.)

I suppose there is no reason for anyone outside of New York to care about our plight, but I'll take a stab at manufacturing "relevance." Division of New York is in the national interest because it would permit a new generation of Upstatesmen to take the stage. We did, after all, give America Martin Van Buren and Grover Cleveland. (With Millard Fillmore we'll take our mulligan.) Barber Conable, my congressman for many years, a man of republican virtue and rectitude, would have made a fine president. Democrats from Rochester and Syracuse are colorless, but the rural Democracy is populist, anti-bureaucracy, and Green. (In many cow counties, the Democrats are the anti-tax, anti-spending party.) Give us our own state and we just might give America another Bob Taft or William Jennings Bryan.

In mid-September, Batavians honored Major Philemon Tracy of the Sixth Georgia Infantry, the only Confederate officer buried in Northern soil during the War.

Tracy was a Macon, Georgia, boy who spent his summers in Batavia with his uncle, Judge Phineas Tracy. When Major Tracy was felled at Antietam, his uncle had the body smuggled north and interred without fanfare in our founders' cemetery. A century and a quarter later, local Civil War buffs, led by Don Burkel—whose printed cards describe his occupation as "Controversial Person"—decided to give Major Tracy a proper memorial.

Fifty or so Batavians paid their respects on a brisk Sunday morning. Reenactment soldiers, blue and gray, planted the stars and bars and stars and stripes in Tracy's dirt. Jefferson Davis made a brief speech. An adorable elementary schoolgirl read Mary Ashley Townsend's poem, "A Georgia Volunteer." The soldiers fired a volley. A bugler played "Taps."

As we left the cemetery, my dad and I talked about the Kauffmans in the Union army, privates all, farmkids who marched off to war. I felt proud of them even as I doubted the justness of suppressing the South. When I got home I performed an etiolated act of localism worthy of the 90's: I opened a beer, flopped on the couch, and watched the Buffalo Bills game on television.

The Bills are a respected team, finally, and Western New Yorkers are inspirited in the days following a big win. Maybe, in some small way, these muscle-bound mercenaries are contributing to a revived regional patriotism. But Philemon Tracy's grave, its Confederate flag rippling in the September breeze, sent a loud and sure admonition to any romantic fools who might still entertain secessionist dreams: *Don't*!

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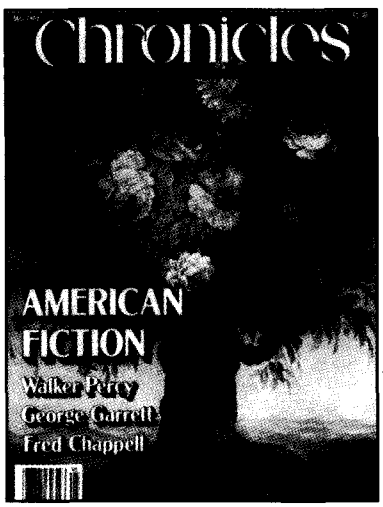
New England Against America

by Clyde Wilson

"The fiction of Mr. Simms gave indication, we repeat, of genius, and that of no common order. Had he been even a Yankee, this genius would have been rendered immediately manifest to his countrymen, but unhappily (perhaps) he was a Southerner. . . . His book, therefore, depended entirely upon its own intrinsic value and resources, but with these it made its way in the end."

—Edgar Allan Poe



Zbigniew and Emilia Fitz

In the heroic effort to establish an American literature, intellect, and culture before the Civil War, the main line of tension was not between cosmopolitans and provincials, nor between classicists and romanticists. It was regional. But the primary regional dividing line was not drawn, as you may think, along the Appalachians (East vs. West), nor along the Potomac (North vs. South). Rather, it was at the Hudson River (New England vs. America).

This descriptive historical truth is now obscured by the fact that the New Englanders were successful in convincing much of posterity that they *were* American culture, a process that was assisted by their colonization of Manhattan during the antebellum period through such figures as Horace Greeley and William Cullen Bryant. Yet the lines of tension were clearly drawn and obvious to everybody at the time: on the one hand, moralistic, reformist, sentimental, pushy, genteel, devolved Puritan, transcendental New Englanders, eager to impose the supremely virtuous model of the closed communities of Massachusetts as the pattern not only for America but for all mankind; on the other hand, a more leisurely and tolerant, openhanded, rural, frontier, traditional, Anglican, gentlemanly (not genteel) spirit that visualized the true American culture as arising from the open spaces South and West of the Hudson (or in the case of Melville, the seas). New York and Philadelphia were in many cultural respects closer to the South than to Boston, at least before the 1850's.

In the literary politics that characterized the antebellum period, a host of well-organized, industrious, mutually admiring New England scribblers pursued a totally ungenerous policy of self-aggrandizement, presenting themselves to the world as America and ignoring or slandering the rest of the country whenever it suited their purposes. After the Civil War, lacking any formal opposition, they had the field pretty much to themselves except for sporadic populist rumblings from the Midwest.

Anyone who will look at what passed for mainstream literary history and criticism in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, for instance, will find a host of second- and third-rate New England writers (Longfellow, Lowell, Whittier, Bancroft, Motley, and many others now justly forgotten) shamelessly celebrated as the perihelion of American letters, with only an occasional slighting reference to Poe or Melville. When Hawthorne appears it is in an interpretation sanitized to please New England schoolmarms of both sexes. It is little known (but true) that the present stature of Poe and Melville and understanding of Hawthorne (all of whom were outside the New England canon) rests upon the heroic efforts of a few scholars and critics in this century to correct, in part, the incredibly mean-spirited and petty Bostonian warp that was imposed on the evaluation of American literature after the Civil War.

It is also a fact that the success of the Bostonians in literary reputation was not matched by the quality of their contributions as measured in the perspective of the ages. American creative literature of the first rank was made almost entirely outside of the Boston-Cambridge ethos. Poe was a self-declared Southerner in perpetual combat all of his short career with the New England spirit; Melville a New York Democrat who could write verse in celebration of the ancient honor

Clyde Wilson is a professor of history at the University of South Carolina. This article first appeared in the May 1989 issue.

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of Virginia in the midst of the Civil War and whose obsessed Captain Ahab was possibly (possibly) a metaphorical abolitionist. Hawthorne was a friend of Franklin Pierce, the most Southern of all Northeastern politicians, and the main thrust of his work is a subversion of the self-congratulatory millennialism of his New England brethren. (I do not count Emerson and Thoreau in the first rank. Even those who admire them must admit that they are would-be philosophers and saints, not strictly creative artists.)

After Poe, Melville, and Hawthorne, the second rank of antebellum literature (omitting some interesting one-book authors) is formed up by Cooper and Irving. Both of them achieved sufficient recognition abroad early enough that they could not be buried under Massachusetts obloquy. Both were at odds with the New England spirit. Read Cooper on the nasty lower-class Yankees (in the original, precise ethnic meaning of that term) who swarmed into and defaced his ancestral region in upstate New York (*Homeward Bound* and *Home as Found*) and in opposition to abolitionists (*The American Democrat*). And recollect that one of Irving's most popular stories concerns the disgrace of an absurd canting New Englander, Ichabod Crane, who presumed too much on the good manners of the Hudson Valley Dutch.

Perhaps the most egregious remaining uncorrected legacy of bias from these old literary wars is the long-continued obscurity and misunderstanding that surrounds the Charleston romancer William Gilmore Simms (1806-1870), who just possibly, when accurately appreciated, will rank shoulder to shoulder with Cooper and Irving. He was the premier antebellum writer of the South, after Poe, and the premier interpreter of the West, after (or perhaps with) Cooper. One of the most prolific, talented, multifaceted, and wide-ranging of American authors in the 19th century, Simms was recognized everywhere before the Civil War (except in the most chauvinist Boston circles) as a major force in the creation of an American literature. Today he is almost unknown in any serious way except to a few specialists.

A measure of the neglect is that the first and last biography of Simms was published in 1892, and that a superficial and badly misconceived one. An excellent six-volume edition of his letters has been produced in South Carolina, but this has been little used by literary scholars and even less by historians, few of whom have awakened to the fact that Simms was the most articulate intellectual in the South in the late antebellum period and thus is, or ought to be, of considerable interest to general as well as literary history.

There are, it is true, some formidable obstacles to an appreciation of Simms. One of the contributors to "*Long Years of Neglect*," James E. Kibler, Jr. (with an essay on Simms' poetry), has said elsewhere that Simms must have written steadily with both hands all his life. He published about 70 or so separate titles—poetry, plays, novels, short stories, history, essays—and probably an equal amount of material, often anonymous or pseudonymous, in the numerous Southern journals of which he served as editor and chief contributor. (In his spare time, Simms was a planter, a public man, and the chief literary talent scout and critic of the South.)

Not only is the volume and diversity of his work so daunting as to encourage most scholars to pass him by, but much of the vast output is hard to find. *The Cassique of Kiawah*, possibly Simms' best novel, is virtually unobtainable. *Woodcraft*, the other possible best, is a little more available, having been reprinted in South Carolina in an annotated edition along with Simms' other Revolutionary War novels during the American Revolution bicentennial. By a strange fate, Simms' best known and most available novel, *The Yemassee*, the one which most people are likely to have read if they have read anything, is far from his best.

Added to these logistical obstacles are the ideological problems. As an unapologetic and explicit defender of the regime of the Old South, Simms is a highly unsympathetic and nearly incomprehensible figure for most modern scholars. Even so, the main reason that Simms' writings are relatively unknown and undervalued is scholarly inertia—the tendency to repeat old errors generation after generation rather than do the hard work of real exploration and reassessment.

In fact, in the past half century or so, there has been a very large accumulation of specialized scholarship on Simms, in books, articles, and theses, exploring specific aspects of his *oeuvres* and life. The net result has been a gradually rising estimate of his literary standing. This considerable literature has never been formulated in a way that has had much impact on general history; however, the present volume of essays does not come out of the blue, but is an expression of a long-gathering movement. In the book are a dozen essays by both literary scholars and historians on Simms' major works and aspects of his career. It remains to be seen whether the insights and judgments presented here will be integrated into a more general understanding.

I do not want to claim too much. Simms possessed a high order of talent, not genius. He did not write *Moby Dick* or *The Scarlet Letter*. His poetry, which he regarded highly, will not be taken too seriously today. Any author as prolific as he was is bound to suffer from unevenness. He is sometimes careless and melodramatic, not, as in the conventional Parringtonian account, because his art was undermined by a romantic and extroverted Southern society, but because a restless temperament led him ever onward to new material. However, at his best, Simms could tell an important story well, with great dramatic conviction and a serious confrontation of moral and social issues.

I do not want to put down Cooper, whom I admire and who has an essential place in American literature. Moreover, Cooper preceded and made possible Simms' literary exploitation of the materials of the American Revolution and frontier. Nevertheless, comparison with Cooper is the most telling that can be made for Simms. I would contend that in his best works Simms was a better storyteller than Cooper, a better plotter, a better psychologist. Moreover, he had a much ampler historical and social imagination as well as a vast fund of something Cooper lacked entirely—humor. Most readers have found Simms' frontiersmen and Indians superior to the more famous characters of Cooper. Moreover, Simms truly anticipated many of the great achievements of 20th-century Southern literature, whereas Cooper has no real progeny.

Most of Simms' major work, and much of the lesser, is found in the three series of novels, or "romances" as he called them, that he produced more or less simultaneously from the 1830's to the 1850's: those set in the colonial Southeast (*The Yemassee*, *The Lily and the Totem*, *The Cassique of Kiawah*, and others); those concerned with the American Revolution in South Carolina (*The Partisan*, *Mellichampe*, *The Scout*,

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Katharine Walton, *The Forayers*, *Eutaw*, *Joscelyn*, and *Woodcraft*); and the "border romances," set in the newer Southern states (*Guy Rivers*, *Richard Hurdis*, *Border Beagles*, *Beauchampe*, and others).

In these books Simms created an all-encompassing, Balzacian panorama, from the 16th to the 19th century, of the history and society of the region south and west of Virginia, a region that is, after all, large and authentically American, even if seldom noticed, except negatively, in Boston. In the process he explored as extensively as anyone ever has the great dramas of colonial settlement, Revolution, and the conquest of the frontier, and portrayed fully every social class—the aristocracy, lesser gentry, yeomen, poor whites, frontiersmen, slaves, Indians. At their best these books display drama, humor, robust realism, large and complex historical themes, and a sophisticated treatment of manners.

By a twist of fate even more curious than the popularity of *The Yemassee* there is a lingering impression that Simms was a prudish, stated writer, full of wooden figures of Southern ladies and gentlemen. Though he did pay some allegiance to ideal aristocratic types, as models for a society that was emerging from the lawlessness and crudity of the frontier, the impression of artificiality is far from just. In fact, in his own time and later, Simms was usually subjected to the opposite criticism. The New Englanders thought that he was too graphic and realistic in dealing with the hard facts of sex, violence, and human drives. Later, when Victorian standards were being abandoned for "realism," he was dismissed as a mere romanticist. He was, thus, first condemned for not being genteel enough, and then for being too much so.

It is closer to the truth to say that Simms, like Faulkner and the other Southern greats, dealt with a full range of characters well, especially vividly and convincingly with the middle order of Southern society, the nonaristocratic whites, and that his most predominant characteristic and greatest virtue as a writer is a robust and often sophisticated realism. Contrary to an oft-repeated judgment also, Simms' women are as close to flesh and blood as those of any contemporary male writer, as Anne M. Blythe shows in discussing the range of female characters in her essay herein on *The Cassique of Kiawah*. The same can be said about the strong and shrewd widow Eveleigh in *Woodcraft*.

The essay by Blythe on *The Cassique of Kiawah* and that on *Woodcraft* by James B. Meriwether, the scholar who has been responsible for bringing a number of Simms' books back into print, are the most important perhaps of a number of good essays in this collection, focusing as they do with considerable depth and insight on Simms' two more enduring books. *Woodcraft*, as Meriwether shows, is a study, at the same time profound and humorous, of the difficult process of restoring social order in South Carolina after the guerrilla civil warfare of the Revolution, told through the experiences of Captain Porgy, a Rabelaisian member of the lesser gentry. Any Southerner will recognize Captain Porgy as an archetypal character of high authenticity. *Woodcraft* displays Simms' historical and social perceptions at their most complex.

Another aspect of Simms' work usefully explicated in this collection is his relationship to the genre known as backwoods humor. In this connection are the essays by Linda E. McDaniel on *Paddy McCann* and Mary Ann Wimsatt on Simms' short fiction. Paddy McCann, one of Simms' late creations, was a South Carolina river boatman, candid and self-assertive in the tradition of the frontier, who by a series of fantastic adventures is transported to New York where he observes the literary society of the day and undergoes haunting experiences of the supernatural reality of evil. Among the short stories, "Sharp Snaffles: How He Got His Capital and His Wife" is surely a neglected masterpiece of 19th-century American writing. It is the story of a landless North Carolina mountaineer's struggle to establish himself as a man and a member of his community. As the essayists show, these works contain seriously conceived and crafted elements of the exuberant fantasy and humor of the American tall tale, interwoven with moral struggle and social criticism and a mature understanding of the human condition. No one who is familiar with these works can dismiss Simms as a mere shallow defender of the aristocracy.

Among the biographical essays, the more noteworthy are Miriam J. Shillingsburg on Simms' last lecture tour in the North in 1856, an eye-opening account of the literary politics that have been previously mentioned, and an analysis by David Moltke-Hansen of the development of Simms' understanding of American history. Simms' achievements in the realm of history are certainly another area of unjust neglect.

Much of Simms' fiction was profoundly historical. He also wrote history and biography, and he thought deeply and originally about the stormy relationship between historical fact and literary art, as may be seen by perusing his collected essays (1845) *Views and Reviews in American Literature: History and Fiction*. In the collection under review new ground is broken in Nicholas G. Meriwether's essay on *The Lily and the Totem*, a failed but interesting attempt by Simms to combine history and fiction in a new genre. It is perhaps not too much to say that in his theory and practice Simms anticipated some of the most creative historical writers of our own time—John Lukacs, Solzhenitsyn, George Garrett, Shelby Foote—in a testing of the frontier between fact and art and a realization of the dead end of so-called objective history.

I have made some rather sweeping assertions about the rightful place of William Gilmore Simms in American letters which the 12 essayists, or many of them, will not necessarily endorse. They are a good deal more circumspect, modest, and scholarly in putting forth his claims than I have been, though most would agree that his standing ought to be higher than it is. You are free to disagree with me, but I will not take you seriously until you have read *Woodcraft*, *The Cassique of Kiawah*, *Paddy McCann*, "*Sharp Snaffles*," and *Views and Reviews in American Literature*. If you have not, you do not know Simms. You do not really know 19th-century American literature.

The writers of the essays would not necessarily agree, either, with the description of 19th-century literary politics with which I introduced my discussion. Yet surely Simms' neglect, if such it is, reflects more than an accidental overlooking of one writer. It reflects a particular partisan heritage of ideological, not literary, judgments which possibly ought to be exposed and reexamined.

The title of the introductory essay by the editor of this collection, John C. Guilds, makes a statement and poses a question: "Long Years of Neglect: Atonement at Last?" The statement is undoubtedly true. The question remains to be answered, though this volume marshals a powerful and pertinent case for reparations. c

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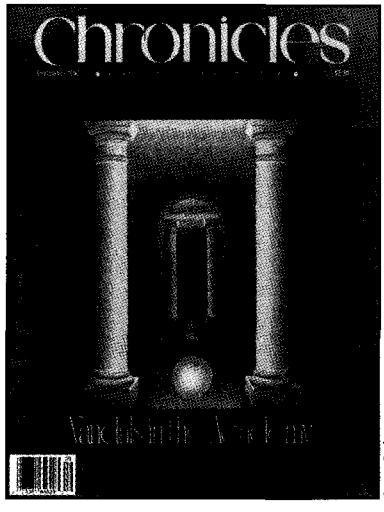
The Final Solution of the Philological Problem

by E. Christian Kopff

"With him the love of country means
Blowing it all to smithereens
And having it all made over new."

—Robert Frost



Igor Galanin

Paul de Man's life was "the classic immigrant story" (according to James Atlas). He arrived in New York in 1948 from his native Belgium and worked as a clerk at the Doubleday bookstore in Grand Central Station. He met Mary McCarthy, who helped him to a job teaching French at Bard College. He fell in love with one of his students, and they got married. By 1955 he was a member of the prestigious Society of Fellows of Harvard University. He ended his career as Sterling Professor of Humanities at Yale. At the time of his death in 1983 he was considered one of the most influential of the Yale "Hermeneutical Mafia," which had made "Deconstruction" and "Literary Theory" terms to conjure with.

In 1987 a young Belgian named Ortwin de Graef uncovered in Belgian newspapers De Man's wartime journalism, written under the Nazi occupation. Jacques Derrida brought the news to the United States. The University of Nebraska Press agreed to publish the many articles in French and Flemish (the latter with English translations) that De Man had published from 1939 to 1943, and the editors asked a number of literary critics and scholars to comment on the publications.

Paul Adolph Michel de Man was born in 1919 in Antwerp, the son of Robert de Man, the prosperous head of l'Establissement de Man, which manufactured medical instruments and X-ray equipment. Young Paul de Man was a student of chemistry at the University of Brussels. His uncle, Hendrik de Man, was the head of the Belgian Workers Party and an important socialist. When Germany conquered Belgium in 1940, he dissolved the party and joined the collaborationist government. "For the working classes and for socialism, this collapse of a decrepit world, far from being a disaster, is a deliverance," he proclaimed. By 1941 he had changed his mind, left the government, and fled to Switzerland. After the war he was convicted of collaboration and died in exile.

His nephew, Paul, wrote many articles for *Le Soir*, Belgium's most popular newspaper, which was controlled by the Nazis after their victory. He wrote in French and Flemish for other papers and journals. Most of his articles were on the arts, especially contemporary literature. The young Paul was a Flemish nationalist who argued that Germany's victory was essential to freeing the German element in Belgian society from French influence. He reviewed seriously modernist and philo-Fascist writers. He wrote an article on "Jews in Contemporary Literature" . . . for an anti-Jewish issue of *Le Soir*. When the Allies started to win, he reestablished contact with anti-Nazi Belgians. Although investigated by the victors in 1945, he was not convicted of war crimes, unlike others who had worked for *Le Soir*. He started a publishing house with his father's money, and when it began to fail, he emigrated to the United States.

He left behind more than an aging and broken father. In 1939 he had met Anaide Baraghian, the Rumanian wife of fellow student Gilbert Jaeger. Anaide and Paul fled together to the Pyrenees before the German invasion and later returned to Belgium to live together. They had three children from 1941 to 1946. By 1948 De Man had moved to New York, while Anaide went to South America with their three sons. In 1949 De Man procured a position as instructor of French at Bard College, where he soon "fell in love with" a young student. It is not clear from my research whether he was divorced from Anaide when he married Patricia Kelley, but this marriage was essential if he were to obtain permanent resident status in the United States. In order to change his status, however, De Man had to exit the United States and return. When he applied for a new Belgian passport, word of his past reached America and Harvard.

Years later his friends at Yale insisted that they had had no idea about his past. If they had said that they had heard rumors, but had dismissed them as idle gos-

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E. Christian Kopff teaches Greek and Latin at the University of Colorado in Boulder. A longer version of this article first appeared in the September 1990 issue.

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sip, we might believe them. Stories of De Man's past had reached the Society of Fellows at Harvard, and he wrote a letter, dated January 26, 1955, to professor of comparative literature Renato Poggioli. Most of what can be checked in the letter is false. He calls Hendrik de Man his father and says that he contributed "some literary articles" to *Le Soir* in 1940 and 1941 (in fact, there were 170), which he stopped doing "when nazi thought-control did no longer allow freedom of expression." He implies that he was married to an American citizen when he entered the country in May 1948 and, oh yes, he had no idea how his family business was doing. "Since 1950 or 51 I have not heard from the firm. This made me assume that things were not going well but, since I had other things on my mind, I did not give it much thought." The firm went bankrupt in 1949. That Paul's real relationship to Hendrik was known at Yale is clear from an article Stanley Corngold, De Man's student, wrote about De Man in 1982. In it Corngold gives a very misleading description of Hendrik's career, with no hint of his collaborationist activities. . . . There need be little doubt that the ignorance of De Man's past at Yale was what De Man called in a *Le Soir* article of March 16, 1942, an *ignorance factice*, an artificial or made-up ignorance.

Is there a connection between De Man's wartime collaboration and his later literary theory? Jon Wiener, in a 1988 piece for the *Nation*, has a simple answer. He is sure that a number of prominent theorists are antisemites and Nazis. For Deconstructionist J. Hillis Miller, De Man's now famous discussion of "Jews in Contemporary Literature" is neither antisemitic nor Nazi, but an attack on "vulgar anti-Semitism." Christopher Norris and Geoffrey Hartman have explained De Man's later work as an implicit attack on his 40's attitudes. The question arises, in a world where all sorts of innocent people are smeared as Nazis and Fascists, why is one person for whom there is documentary evidence for his Nazism defended in places like the *New Republic*?

One place to start looking for an answer is with a quotation from "Criticism and Crisis," the first essay in *Blindness and Insight*. . . . In it De Man castigates an essay written in 1935 by the German philosopher Edmund Husserl and comments on "the numerous sections in which philosophy is said to be the historical privilege of European man." He ends by noting,

> Husserl's claim to European supremacy hardly stands in need of criticism today. Since we are speaking of a man of superior good will, it suffices to point to the pathos of such a claim at a moment when Europe was about to destroy itself as center in the name of its unwarranted claim to be the center.

What is the meaning of the language used? Conventional Nazi rhetoric talks about the Master Race as being the highest stage in human evolution—vocabulary that pretends to superiority in time and quality, but that says nothing about "centrality."

In *Le Soir* for March 16, 1942, De Man discussed an exhibition on "Germany's Greatness" (the translation here is mine).

> There is another reason why Germany's historical destiny, past and future, cannot leave us indifferent. We depend on it directly. First of all because there exists between Germany and Belgium a profound interpretation [*sic*; relationship?] that reveals itself through the centuries by constant political and artistic contacts. Besides that, because no one can deny the fundamental significance of Germany for the life of the West taken as a whole. We must see in that stubborn refusal to let herself be conquered more than a simple proof of national faithfulness. The entire continuity of Western civilization depends on the unity of the people who are at its center. That is why the facts that determine the course of German history touch us twice: because we are Belgians, since they affect the values we share with it, and because we are Europeans, since Europe's strength depends on it. . . .

Now we know where the language of the "center" comes from in De Man's review of Husserl. It was De Man's memory of the way he and other young Quislings used to talk back in the 40's. Why did no one question this language when "Criticism and Crisis" was first published in 1967? For the same reason that Geoffrey Hartman quotes this passage as part of his defense of De Man in the *New Republic* in 1988. It sounded to him like the kind of thing that a good, non-Eurocentric leftist should say—though I know of no reason why leftists should feel that the defeat of Nazism and the introduction of constitutional government into more than half of Europe was a defeat, even a destruction of Europe. Why did no one at the University of Texas (where the talk was first given) ask De Man why he said "Europe" when he meant "Germany"? Why did no one ask De Man why he saw the defeat of Nazi Germany as the destruction of Europe "as center"? I know why a Nazi would say such a thing, but who else would? . . .

It is striking that the De Man of the 40's admires Germany for coming back from defeat. He had no such ambitions for himself. He wanted to be with the winners at all times and at all costs. When Germany was winning, she was the center. When Germany lost, it was time to emigrate to the United States. There were no regrets for Europe.

De Man's *Critical Writings, 1953-1978* was reprinted in 1988 by the University of Minnesota Press. What are called his books are reprints of earlier essays with some new material. He never edited a text or wrote a commentary on a work of literature. His essays typically take a small part of an author's work and discuss it from a narrow perspective. Nevertheless, the literary-critical establishment has drawn the wagon train into a circle around De Man's accomplishments.

The question of De Man's lack of substantive publication is serious. One of the most common myths about the academy is that "good teaching" is rejected in favor of scholarly publication. Whatever may be true in the physical sciences, for the humanities this is arrant nonsense. Two thirds of tenured faculty in the humanities publish nothing but their dissertations, if they publish that. Some of what appears consists of literary criticism or theory, with no historical or textual base, often setting the words of the text completely at naught. . . . Most faculty are tenured on the basis of a few unrefereed or virtually unrefereed articles and their reputations as Great Teachers. The more cynical look for administrative posts or become chairmen of their departments, where they get much better raises than serious publication brings and whence they can fight off the hiring or tenuring of serious scholars.

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Few of De Man's articles appeared in prestigious refereed journals. Of the essays in *Blindness and Insight*, one appeared in *Modern Language Notes*. The rest appeared first in *Festschriften*, special issues of journals, unrefereed journals, or in the Acta of conferences. One piece of the newly reprinted *Critical Writings* appeared first in *Comparative Literature*; the rest in foreign reviews, literary journals, or the *New York Review of Books*. A good scholar will appear in such places, of course, but he will also appear in refereed journals and presses. None of De Man's articles concerned the kind of historical and textual questions for which adequate standards have been developed over the years. His style is a mush of obfuscating jargon, about which his disciples boasted. (Attempting to show the influence of Sartre on De Man, Stanley Corngold wrote in 1982, "Here is Sartre's deliberate antibourgeois refusal to write well . . . that has proved congenial to De Man.") If Yale was not only tenuring and promoting De Man, but giving him its most prestigious chair of the humanities, it was for reasons other than publication.

Was it because of crypto-Nazism in literary academia, as Jon Wiener hinted? On the surface the idea is not absurd. Liberalism, communism, and fascism are all revolutionary movements that developed out of opposition to traditional European values and norms. They are not the same, but they share many ideas and instincts. An intelligent Nazi would not easily give himself away in an American university, any more than smart communists betrayed themselves in the State Department of the 40's. J. Hillis Miller claims that Deconstruction helps to undermine "totalizing and totalitarian thinking." Gerald Graff tells us that Marxist New Historicists and feminists have seized upon Deconstruction as an essential tool in their attack on America. Miller cites no evidence to support his claim, while Graff's statement is easy to confirm. The fact that Marxists use a method does not of itself prove that the method is totalitarian. If, however, we then discover that one of the founders of this method was in his youth a Nazi, can we honestly act surprised?

What about De Man's antisemitic article? This is what Jacques Derrida called the "open wound." J. Hillis Miller tells us that the article is a defense of Jews and literary modernism against "vulgar anti-Semitism." Then one reads the article. "Vulgar anti-Semites" think that Jews are intelligent and aggressive and run modern culture. De Man thinks, *au contraire*, that Jews are second-rate as thinkers and mediocre as writers. If they were all shipped off to Madagascar, Europe would lose some mediocre talents. In his later academic life, De Man's colleagues included Geoffrey Hartman, Harold Bloom, and Jacques Derrida. Did their thinking and writing give him cause to change his mind? We have many statements that he did not go around Yale making openly antisemitic remarks. In other words, he was not stupid, which no one accuses him of being. The issue is, did he ever change his mind from his clearly expressed opinion of 1941, that shipping, for example, Hartman, Bloom, and Derrida off to "a Jewish colony isolated from Europe would not involve, for the literary life of the West, deplorable consequences"?

It is clear from a reading of the essays on De Man that the only aspect of De Man's past that bothers most theorists is his contempt for Jews. There is not a single attack on De Man because he was a Quisling, because he betrayed his country for an ideology. The normal, healthy person loves his country as he loves his family, not because they fit into a theory, but because they are his. If your son fails an examination or your country loses a battle to Germany, you do not abandon him or repudiate it. That is what Stephen Decatur meant when he made his famous toast: Our country, right or wrong. Most Americans know this instinctively, just as they know what kind of man deserts his wife and children or flatters brutal dictators for self-advancement. We begin to understand De Man's obsession with Rousseau, to whom he attributes his own views. They were the same kind of person, although even Rousseau never managed to achieve De Man's triple of Quisling, bankrupt, and deserter of his family.

Totalitarianism has lost, when it has lost, because of the existence of the United States of America. The American way of life represented in the 40's, as it still does, a profound commitment to the traditions—political, ethical, and religious—that have developed out of ancient Greece, Rome, and Israel; traditions that helped form Europe. It stands as the great alternative to the deracinated ideologies that almost destroyed Europe during World War II. These European traditions survive in many ways, in memory and in practice, but one of the most important ways they survive is in books. . . . Within English literature, from the poet of *Beowulf* to Walker Percy, these traditions are presupposed and represented. They live there, among other places. If young people read these great works, these traditions will seize on their minds as they have on so many other generations.

The genius of Deconstruction is that it allows the teacher, the transmitter of society's values, to concentrate on what is not talked about. Is Pamela frigid? Is Jim in love with Huck Finn? Why are the works of the canon permeated with Platonism, or Christianity, or patriarchy? What is the feminist perspective on Shakespeare? . . . The teacher may spend class time, and the student may pass hours writing papers, exorcising these demons. In one essay, De Man showed that Derrida falsely attributed to Rousseau a simplistic view of progress that was clearly and explicitly rejected in Rousseau's text. It does not matter, though, De Man tells us. Derrida's attitude is still the right one. The critic's blindness, what we lesser breeds without the Law call his blunders, are essential to his genius. The point is not to enter into a sympathetic relationship with the author. That implies a false metaphysic of presence. The truest criticism is to interrupt the Great Conversation with our own concerns and to shout down, or deny tenure to, the reader, philologist, or historian who would let the authors speak for themselves. . . .

The dream of the literary theorist is the final solution to our country's history (which is only "a written text," according to De Man) and literature and culture and religion. It is the way for us to free the world from "totalizing thinking," from learning from literature how to make sense of our own lives and our culture, from the delusion that wise men have distilled their wisdom for us in the honey of words.

The irony of human life lies hidden in the mystery that in order to reach out to speak to or to understand someone else, we have to be firmly rooted in family, in nation, in religion, in culture. Without that there is no creativity and no comprehension, no art and no criticism. "You must not think that living according to your country's way of life is slavery," says Aristotle; "it is the way home." By betraying home and family Paul de Man cut himself off from ever understanding great literature. c

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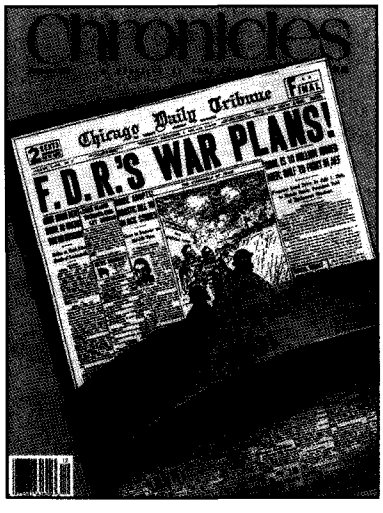
From the Family of the Lion

by M.E. Bradford

"There is a kind of revolution of so general a character that it changes the tastes as well as the fortunes of the world."

—La Rochefoucauld

There is a popular myth of Abraham Lincoln, our 16th President, that is known to most Americans. According to the orthodox version of this highly sympathetic construct, Lincoln was a plain and honest fellow, called by other plain, uncalculating men to preserve the handiwork of the Fathers, the Old Republic, perfecting that inheritance in the process of keeping it together. This Lincoln is no illustration of frenzied ambition, but rather a simple soul who had stumbled first into the practice of law and then into Illinois politics. He hated war but was determined to honor a trust put into his hands, even if that commitment meant more killing than in all other American wars put together. A reluctant and gentle conqueror, he stood ready, once secession had ended, to welcome the South back into the national family: like the father in the parable, rejoicing at the return of foolish children. Such is the Lincoln who grew melancholy in thinking of what blacks endured and who "died to make them free." This Father Abraham, the sad man of Illinois, the prairie republican/Republican, in his spirit still hovers over this nation, giving direction and encouragement to successive generations of his countrymen. Of his early life we know that he identified with the poor, that he read by firelight, lost his sweetheart, deplored the Mexican War, and served a frontier community as a member of the state legislature and the U.S. Congress. As a spokesman for wholesome, local ways, he debated Stephen Douglas. And he truly suffered in presiding over his country at war, spending blood only with agonized reluctance—certainly with no idea of reshaping its social and political order so as to make of it a vehicle for his private dreams of what power in the state might accomplish. So goes the myth.



Anna Mycek-Wodecki

In making, over a period of two decades, a series of scholarly objections to the distortion and oversimplification embodied in this myth, I had the pleasure of being treated briefly as the object of national puzzlement and irritation. For about five weeks I was cast as the leading villain in a political melodrama of what a public servant is allowed to believe: anathema because of what I said about the American past. Obviously, what I thought of Lincoln was not the real issue behind this affected and rhetorical outrage at my political heresy. But to my surprise, it is now evident that in most fashionable academic neighborhoods my understanding of Lincoln as transforming agent (which is, in essence, Willmoore Kendall's view of the evidence) has come all the way around to seem not at all farfetched. Or at least that is true of the descriptive component of my analysis.

James M. McPherson's *Abraham Lincoln and the Second American Revolution* summarizes the current trend in interpretive historiography on this subject. His Lincoln is a radical refounder of the "Old Republic of the Fathers," like the "lion" and "eagle" of which Lincoln had first spoken in his 1838 "Springfield Lyceum Speech"; an American Caesar who, in McPherson's phrase, through "his own superb leadership, strategy, and sense of timing . . . determined the pace of the revolution [of 1860] and ensured its success." Arguing more or less to the same effect, Carl N. Degler in the *New York Times* last February 12 maintained that Lincoln was the American Bismarck and that "What the [Civil] War represented, in the end, was the forceful incorporation of the South into a newly created nation." Which, in both cases, is what I have argued all the time.

However, there is one big difference between McPherson's Lincoln and what the record should lead us to conclude. For McPherson believes that all of this refounding by policy, construction, demagogy, and force of arms was wonderful to behold, pointing toward a "more perfect Union" than even James Madison could have imagined. In other words, he likes what the United States, as a political construct, has become better than he likes what it was. Those who do not, on balance, share in his enthusiasm for the present configuration of our political system in omnicompetent government obviously will not agree with McPherson's evaluation of Lincoln's handiwork; those who differ with him about a "new birth of freedom" brought about by violation of contract will see a rejection of the terms of that contract in the accomplishments at Gettysburg, at Atlanta, and at Appo-

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The late M.E. Bradford was a professor of English at the University of Dallas. This article first appeared in the December 1991 issue.

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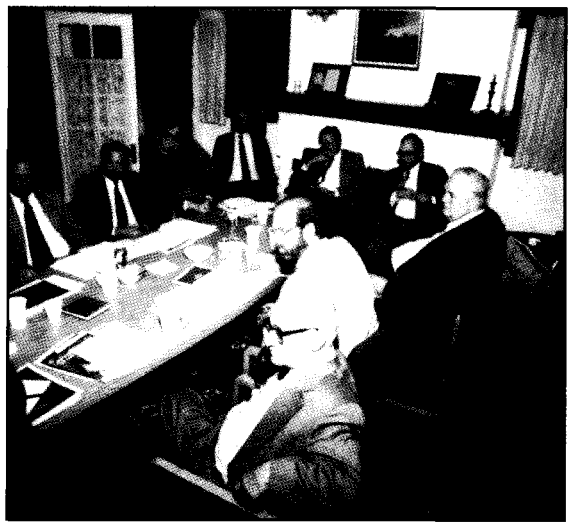

From left: David Gordon, Paul Gottfried, Samuel Francis, Michael Warder, Allan Carlson, George Resch, Mel Bradford, Lew Rockwell, and Murray Rothbard.

mattox Court House. McPherson's Lincoln "as he seems to us now" is a summary figure in one of the great American political traditions, that heritage which affirms the growing power of Leviathan to achieve ends and purposes it thinks proper, to apply its rhetoric and its energy to reshape the recalcitrant material of the body politic. In this system what seems fit according to some extrinsic philosophical or moral standard is also lawful, regardless of what Constitution and statute leave to the irregular operations of free choice among constituent members. McPherson clearly belongs to that tradition. Those who measure the history of American politics against the paradigm of the old Constitution, or who affirm in public life no more regulation than what that document, as amended, permits will not, however, be at ease with McPherson on Lincoln's version of liberty, of unconditional surrender, implied powers, and revolutionary transformation cum preservation of the Union. Such Americans as are put off by this intrusive paradigm will not have so sanguine a view of Mr. Lincoln. For they come out of another American political tradition, the one which gave us our original Constitution and Bill of Rights. For them the Emancipator will always seem to be a crafty manipulator of men's emotions, a great incendiary, and almost a tyrant. Nothing in McPherson's evidence dislodges me from membership in this second company.

McPherson's arguments for Lincoln as a second Founder is based on an analysis of the "scope and meaning of revolutionary transformations in both substance and process wrought by the Civil War" and "Lincoln's leadership in accomplishing these changes." McPherson doesn't dwell on the formal characteristics of the original Republic, what defined it before Mr. Lincoln came along. But he is serious about the word "revolution." Of what happened when the South was defeated and how Lincoln shaped that victory, he writes, "Abraham Lincoln was not Maximilien de Robespierre. No Confederate leaders went to the guillotine. Yet the Civil War changed the United States as thoroughly as the French Revolution changed that country." Lincoln accomplished this legerdemain by making liberty a gift of government—and by assigning to the federal power a general responsibility for the well-being of American citizens. This much it accomplished by freeing the slaves and preserving the Union by military means—not by persuasion and politics—thus putting the civil bond which makes a nation on a new basis. Of the origin of the Old Republic in resistance to a power remote, unresponsive, and potentially hostile McPherson has little to say.

He praises Abraham Lincoln for his use of metaphor (Lincoln was the greatest master of the language among all our Presidents) and for his ability to stick to one large objective. He treats the modern theory of total war leading to unconditional surrender as if it could conceivably enjoy moral standing. And he invents a doctrine of liberty with which most men might be enslaved, "for their own good." But these exercises are merely conventional and adjunctive. For McPherson is really about his business only in discoursing on his favorite American revolution and its objectives: to free the slaves; to end Southern domination of national politics; to change, internally, the social order of the South; and to commit the entire nation to a new politics, derivative of the second sentence of the Declaration of Independence, not the Constitution. After 1865, almost everyone in the South was poor. But McPherson is simplistic with reference to the essentially familial order of life in the region: Politicization of private things did not come until after 1918. And for the meliorist, the progressive, destruction of slavery by war was a far more complicated business than this book or McPherson's earlier studies of abolitionists would allow. Concerning Southern domination of national politics, he hits the mark. In retrospect, that shift in control was clearly the central meaning of this conflict. But as Charles Fairman, Phillip Paludan, and Earl M. Maltz have taught us, the United States Supreme Court in the Reconstruction era, with assistance from Congress and various Northern states, prevented the remaking of the Constitution: prevented even a radical reading of the Reconstruction amendments. Therefore, we have to conclude that McPherson's "revolution" is a product of the imagination; and his Lincoln less the practical politician (who at one point supported the original 13th Amendment that would have protected slavery forever) and more the American demigod of the Lincoln Memorial.

Thus I cannot rejoice at the extent to which Professor McPherson would seem to agree with me. For McPherson on Lincoln the revolutionary constitutes a study in inversion of terms and ingenuity in argument—an abuse of the evidence—and is less impressive than Herndon in his narrative of the strong country lad who could wrestle and pin his enemy, who learned to play his cards as they came, and who could summon eloquence when he needed it—especially when he imitated the country preachers and the language of the Authorized Version.

* * *

In early August, I turned in this review to the literary editor of *National Review*, who had commissioned it. Although he indicated in a telephone conversation that he liked it well enough, later he informed me that the editors of *National Review* had decided not to run the piece because it might be taken as an expression of the magazine's editorial philosophy. As a result, I sent a letter to the editor-in-chief, terminating my association of 25 years with that publication.

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Onan Agonistes

by J.O. Tate

I've been trying to figure out what somebody could do with the thirty bucks (plus tax) that they're asking for Harold Brodkey's word-processing product. My copy was no bargain for free. You could buy two pizzas and two six-packs and have quite a party for that sum. You could wire your sweetie pie a nice bouquet by FTD. If movies were worth seeing, you could buy five tickets. There are all kinds of things you could do with the money, but the big loss is in time and energy—time that might have been spent on subgingival curettage or root canal work or study of feminist theory or whatever. Perhaps a mercifully brief description of *The Runaway Soul* will show just why its perusal would seem fitting for few others besides Harold Bloom, Gordon Lish, Keith Mano, and those who have puffed Harold Brodkey's "genius." There are two elements of the novel that I can bring myself to comment on. The first is substance; the second, style.

The Runaway Soul is a highly subjective *Künstlerroman* freighted with an elaborate psychological apparatus, a Freudian family romance, and a concentration of the hero-narrator's "growth," "genius," consciousness, and masturbatory sex life. The orphan Wiley Silenowicz, whose adoptive name suggests both wiliness and Silenus, relates somehow the tangled bafflements (he does not or cannot "tell a story") concerning his second family: his father, S.L.; his mother, Lila; and his older sister, Nonie. These characters each have their moments, their presences in Wiley's life and consciousness; of the three, one inspired in me a flicker of interest—Nonie, who seems to be pathologically wicked and hates Wiley, and who appears to have killed two other siblings. My own hope—that she would terminate Wiley's interminable "narrative" by stabbing him to death with a sharp instrument, by killing him with a revolver or with a sporting rifle or shotgun or semiautomatic or fully automatic weapon, by setting him on fire with gasoline, or by squashing him to death with a laundromat—was not fulfilled. Other characters in the novel include a lover of Wiley's later years, Ora (a.k.a. Orra), whom I took to be female even though at least one of Wiley's sexual encounters with her/him seemed to end—if that is the right word—in yet another of his physical and literary masturbations. Anyway, Wiley's homosexual episodes with Remsen and Daniel and others are entirely suited to his character, being either literally or essentially masturbatory in those same senses of that word by now extremely familiar to both the reader and the explicator of *The Runaway Soul*.

Reading between the lines that are themselves unreadable, we may discern the elements of a novel that somehow escaped the master's grasp. There are even brief glimpses of daylight and of the out-of-doors, as well as of social life, which in other hands would have constituted a narrative; though even here, we would have had to admit that touches like Ora's father, the literary scene as embodied in New York cocktail parties, and a few others, constitute material that has already been treated adequately by Norman Mailer.

Even granting the genius his *donnée*, there may yet be some slight reservation about a prose style that would gag a buzzard. The trouble with Wiley-as-narrator is that he writes like Harold Brodkey on a good day. He seems to have an ungift, an ineptitude with language that he inflicts unsparingly on his audience: He goes for the off-putting word—even the wrong sound, not to mention the unwelcome thought—unerringly. As Wiley lovably says, "But, for me, isn't it self-love that starts the progress towards orgasm?" He knows himself: "I sort of gawp—inwardly." Ain't it the truth.

The following lines, chosen by a *sorites Brodeyanae*, represent the ineffable style of the revered master: "I don't know of what elements my heterosexuality consists. Or my androgyny." And this paragraph:

> It wasn't that I was so grand sexually. I am acceptable sexually (which is actually quite a lot), but I make a point of it, of being that, and that doubles the acceptability for some people, that it is something known, and that one tries to be it. Often, then, I am a little bored sexually—that redoubles it . . . Only a little bored . . . "You are the handsomest man in the world"—she says that; it is a metaphor of a kind. She was collecting herself, finding herself, in an inconsecutive way, among the consecutions of our invention of our sexual tone back and forth, and in the faith that in the sequence of moments something might happen and all the moments (all our moments) were unbetrayed so far and would be unbetrayed still at the end, sort of.

The combination of substance (masturbation and genius) conveyed by style (noisome droning—the Brodkey touch) is one that leaves something, anything, and everything to be desired. Reflection suggests that *The Runaway Soul*, besides not having any soul, didn't run away far enough, and that if there had been any *Künst*, then there might have also been some *Roman*. As it is, this thing ranks not only with the worst novels I have read in the last 35 years but with the most unpleasant experiences I have ever endured. To listen to Wiley Silenowicz relate the uncanny growth of his narcissistic mind, only to wind up with yet another tenderly rendered masturbation scene after some 700 pages, is enough to confirm thoughts about the New York literary scene that I have long entertained.

Considering with how much breathless expectancy this book was anticipated (for 27 years), we may well wonder about the competence of those who touted the author for a generation. And when we consider the price that is asked not so much in money as in exasperation and degradation, we may also wonder about the state of culture in a nation with such an inverted sense of art.

J.O. Tate is a professor of English at Dowling College on Long Island. This article first appeared in the July 1992 issue.

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Letter From Cincinnati

by Janet Scott Barlow

Stranger in Paradise

◆

When I moved to Cincinnati from Chicago in 1973, I found I could gauge the personality of my new city by listing the things I missed about the home I'd left. I missed the bulging Chicago newspapers. I missed being in a place where cynicism competes with humor as the prevailing public attitude and humor often wins. I missed the Cubs. I missed the presence of an irrepressibly vocal populace. (Spend ten minutes with a Chicago South Sider and you'll learn everything from his views on the state of the world to his mother's maiden name, and he'll throw in a recommendation on where to get a brake job on your car.) I missed politics as a contact sport and Mike Royko's big mouth. I missed Democrats.

I went along like that for about a year and a half, keeping my little list and indulging my grief, until it finally occurred to me that there's more than one version of paradise. I realized that political boredom can grow on you, especially when it's accompanied by civic order. I realized that one of the reasons my morning paper seemed skimpy was that it didn't contain endless stories of horrific crimes from the day before. I discovered that it's acceptable, even enjoyable, to root for a baseball team that can actually win, and rather soothing to reside in a town where the day's biggest news might be "Reds Sweep Road Trip." I found it could be relaxing not to hear *everybody's* opinion about *everything*. I never stopped missing living in the same city with Mike Royko, bless his angry, funny heart, but I had one consolation: I no longer lived in the same city with Bob Greene. As for Democrats, I stopped missing them when I pretty much stopped being one.

Today, the biggest difference between me, the rooted transplant, and native Cincinnatians is that natives get openly—if politely—defensive when the city is criticized, while I tend toward covert defensiveness. When New York acquaintances come to town on business (and a lot of business is done here) and say to me, sometimes good-humoredly, sometimes not, "What do you people do around here after 11 P.M.?" I tell them that we just try to avoid stepping in cowflop and getting overly excited at the bingo games and hey, how about that Reds road trip?

But born-and-bred Cincinnatians are not given to leg-pulling, mixing it up, or playing tit for tat. When big-city Easterners complain that there is no place here to get a seven-course meal at 3 A.M., Cincinnatians don't say, "So what?" or "Who the hell wants to eat at 3 A.M.?" or "Right you are; so the next time you come to town, pack a snack." What they say is, "That's true, but . . . " Then they go on to mention the beloved Reds and the splendid Bengals (See? We're in the big time), the city ballet, the symphony, and the museums (See? We've got culture); the general quality of life, the *niceness* of living here. You want more? We've got a five-star French restaurant (it closes at 11—sorry) and a *great* zoo.

So Cincinnatians are defensive, yes, but they're also earnest. The city is so earnest, in fact, that if it finds itself misunderstood too often or consistently, the whole place breaks out in mental hives, a kind of collective psychological rash.

Defensive and earnest. That's the phrase that ran through my mind during the course of our latest controversy, the one centering on the now beyond famous Robert Mapplethorpe photography exhibit. Our last municipal disturbance involved, you'll recall, Pete Rose and his banishment from baseball. Cincy took its lumps for its response to the Rose episode, deservedly in my opinion (too much defensiveness, not enough earnestness), and took its lumps again for community reaction to the Mapplethorpe show. But this time it was a bum rap. As briefly as possible, here is the program of events. The sequence is important.

1) Amidst a nationwide debate over either "obscene" art or obscene "art," depending on who was doing the talking (I came to think of it as the war of the quotation marks), Cincinnati's Contemporary Arts Center (CAC) makes plans to exhibit the Mapplethorpe retrospective.

2) Citizens for Community Values, a group whose members include local business executives, religious leaders, and various Cincinnati Bengals, objects to the exhibit's inclusion of seven photographs that are described by the arts group as "Mapplethorpe's most challenging works" and by the community values group as examples of obscenity. In the background, law-enforcement officials, citing local obscenity statutes, begin making threatening noises.

3) The national media pick up on the controversy and cast the story more or less as "Hick Town Has Fit Over Art Pix."

4) The conflict, which has become an issue, now stimulates a public debate on the questions of censorship and free expression, the definitions of art and pornography, the purpose and limits of community standards. Through the vehicle of their local newspapers' op-ed pages, countless Cincinnatians participate in the debate by organizing their thoughts, expressing them coherently, and signing their names. The debate takes this form: It is genuinely searching; it is marked throughout, with few exceptions, by civility, sincerity, and restraint; it is undergirded by the assumption that decent people can disagree and is therefore almost completely free of the suggestion by either side that those on the opposing side are, by virtue of their opinions, immoral, unpatriotic, subversive, or evil.

5) The exhibit opens, whereupon city and county officials treat Cincinnatians to the unsettling sight of uniformed policemen clearing out and closing down (for an hour) a crowded art gallery. Immediately, the CAC and its director are indicted on misdemeanor obscenity charges by a Hamilton County grand jury (charges that will still be unresolved when the exhibit closes on schedule seven weeks later).

6) The local debate, still restrained, intensifies; the national Hick Town stories increase; the *Washington Post* editorializes that what's going on in Cincinnati, while superficially "amusing," actually "isn't funny at all."

7) Neither the "police raid" on the arts center nor the indictment against it is universally applauded by Cincinnatians, a fact that prompts city and county officials to do their version of The Three Stooges Play Politics: You prosecute the

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case. No, *you* prosecute it.

8) Cincinnati breaks out in its everybody-thinks-we're-rubes rash (defensive), even as it continues to struggle with the issues before it (earnest). The media picks up on the defensiveness and ignores the earnestness. The Hick Town stories continue; the rash spreads. Even Mike Royko is heard from. The legal action against the CAC and its director has made "Cincinnati look like a big rube town, which I never thought it was," says Royko. "It's always struck me as being a medium-sized rube town." (For me, this is a letdown. I expected better from Royko—which is to say, I expected worse.)

If your source of information on Mapplethorpe in Cincinnati was the national media, you saw reported or suggested just about everything on the above list, with the glaring exception of number four: the quality and character of the local debate, a debate that was not only an essential part of the story but a remarkable and heartening occurrence in itself, especially in a time when so much public discourse is an exercise in rancor and rhetorical excess. What's more, the media decided on their Hick Town slant before the hicks themselves had been heard from, and stayed with that slant even after the appearance of abundant evidence that might have challenged it. Why did they do that? One possibility is the constraints of daily journalism. So much news, so little time! Examining assumptions takes effort, therefore stereotypes have their uses. The only other possibility I can think of is that the national journalistic establishment actually believes that any city that would question the public display of sadomasochistic and homoerotic photographs is by definition a hick town.

For their efforts in debating difficult, complex issues with a measure of dignity and goodwill, Cincinnatians saw themselves trashed on a national scale. The *New York Times* labeled Cincinnati "[possibly] the most sexually restrictive big city in the country." On its face that statement is false. Sex is not restricted in Cincinnati, no matter what the *New York Times* says; in fact, people have sex here all the time. What is restricted is the availability of peep shows, nudie bars, massage parlors, and X-rated movies. The *Times* also accused Cincinnati, in so many words, of hypocrisy for being located right across the river from Newport, Kentucky, which makes available to Cincinnatians the strip joints their own city forbids—the *Times*' point being that some Cincinnatians actually cross the river for that reason. (The article was a doubly cheap shot, in that Newport, its burlesque clubs notwithstanding, has made great efforts in recent years to rid its streets and its image of sleaze.)

Finally, the *New York Times* reported, more than once, that the Mapplethorpe show had traveled to cities from Hartford to Berkeley "without incident," while Cincinnati had "nearly gone into convulsions" over the exhibit. Please. This simply isn't a convulsion-prone city. The only event here that ever came close to being convulsive was Pete Rose's banishment from baseball, and, for better or for worse, the photographs of Robert Mapplethorpe, stranger in paradise, are no match for that. What the Mapplethorpe exhibit produced in Cincinnati was a community debate (and a good one), accompanied by a community rash.

The exhibit also prompted public demonstrations outside the CAC, the largest of which was estimated at 1,000 by the *New York Times*, 500 by the local papers. The demonstrations went like this. The anticensorship forces, made up mostly of students, did what college kids (and those who want to act like college kids) sometimes are inclined to do: They pulled out the rhetorical stops by yelling "Fascists!" at the police and carrying signs with warnings about Hitler. The anti-pornography group did its own name-dropping in the form of placards reading "God Is Against Pornography And So Are We." As public demonstrations go in this country, Cincinnati's were both typical in character and ho-hum in overall effect—hardly "convulsive."

Is it any wonder Cincinnatians are defensive? I can't think of another city in the country in which outside observers confuse the absence of sleaze with the absence of sex. This may be the only city in America that gets stigmatized for having *too little* commercial vice. Name one other city that is expected to answer not only for what it won't permit, but for what its neighboring cities will. Name one other city that's supposed to explain itself for being dissimilar in attitude to *Berkeley*. Before it was all over, I expected to see a *New York Times* headline announcing "Impossible To Get Seven Course Meal in Cincinnati at 3 A.M."

Since no one else bothered (and before I break out in a rash myself), it's worth taking a look at Cincinnati's debate over the Mapplethorpe exhibit and asking why that debate was so civilized. I can think of three reasons.

First, the concepts of "community standards" and "community values" aren't worth arguing about unless you actually have a community. And Cincinnati is a community. That is, the things Cincinnatians agree on are more binding than the things they disagree on are divisive. Thus there was during the Mapplethorpe controversy the awareness that even on emotional issues, *especially* on emotional issues, it is a matter of civic as well as intellectual responsibility to think twice before deciding that one's neighbors are "the enemy."

Second, local politicians pretty much kept silent. This was in part a reflection of the nature of the beast—most politicians don't risk voluntary plunges into sticky issues—and in part an example of the subdued character of Cincinnati politics. In any case, the silence was, in this instance, a help. With public opinion split and most city leaders lacking the nerve or the inclination to try exploiting the controversy for political gain, Cincinnatians had the issue pretty much to themselves, and their discussions were not limited to or by politics.

The published dialogue stimulated by the Mapplethorpe exhibit ran all over the map. It touched on all the obvious questions and many that weren't so obvious. It included the opinion of a local pediatric specialist that it is dangerous to make children "the focus of sexual attention or interest" ("Not for a moment," he wrote, "not as entertainment; not as art"), and the opinion of others who said that any sexual interest in Robert Mapplethorpe's photographs of exposed children is in the mind of the beholder, not the photographer/artist. The debate included complaints about the hypocrisy of corporate executives whose self-promotional support for the arts suddenly becomes conditional on their personal artistic preferences, and complaints about the arrogance of an arts community that interprets as "financial blackmail" any limits to, or conditions on, corporate generosity. The view was expressed that if Robert Mapplethorpe had used animals or women instead of men as the subjects of his sadomasochistic pictures, some free-expression advocates would instantly be on the other side, raising outraged questions about the limits of free expression. And that view was met with the ar-

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gument that all such what-ifs are irrelevant diversions, entirely beside the point.

The debate gave each side the opportunity to ask its most important question, which happened to be the same question: Where do we draw the line? Those opposed to closing the exhibit asked it this way: If we allow these pictures to be censored today, what will be censored tomorrow? Those in favor of closing the exhibit wanted to know: If we allow these pictures to be displayed as art today, what will be displayed as art tomorrow? Rounding things out were a few stubborn citizens who would not be distracted by future implications, insisting that the issue was *these* pictures in *this* community at *this* moment.

Some Cincinnatians were painfully ambivalent about the whole business, not wanting the obscene/challenging photographs shown, but not wanting them seized by the law either. And one or two found it very important that if an exhibit they disapproved of were shut down, they would be denied the opportunity to stay away of their own volition. (If you ban it, I can't boycott it—I loved that one.) And one fellow even took the time to state his right as an American and a Cincinnatian to be "apathetic" about the entire affair, apparently oblivious to the fact that apathetic people don't write letters to the editor.

The debate was, then, an exploration of ideas, values, responsibilities, and attitudes, one that did not get hopelessly tangled up in political rhetoric, in large part because it took place in a convenient, if cowardly, political leadership vacuum.

The third factor responsible for Cincinnati's civility in the midst of controversy was the city's intrinsic social conservatism. *Conservative* can be a rash-causing word in Cincinnati, and if you say it in a certain tone of voice, city spokesmen will start getting all blotchy, as they wave surveys of Hamilton County voting patterns (in the national mainstream) and explain the political makeup of the city council (pretty even-steven). So let's spare them that ordeal and define the term. *Conservative* in Cincinnati means: moderate, cautious, family-oriented, and tradition-bound. It does not mean: reactionary, bigoted, intolerant, or ignorant. So again: Cincinnati's intrinsic social conservatism was responsible for its civility in the face of controversy. Of course, Cincinnati's intrinsic social conservatism was also responsible for the controversy in the first place. But unless you believe that community conflict over the definition of art is in itself repressive or dangerous, the fact of the conflict will mean less than the character and content of the ensuing debate.

Which brings us back to out-of-towners, some of whom did indeed object to the very fact of Cincinnati's conflict over the definition of art. Before the Mapplethorpe opening, the *Cincinnati Enquirer* reported that Howard Read, director of photography for the Robert Miller Gallery in New York City, was heading here to view the exhibit. Read went most New Yorkers one better—he formed his negative opinion of Cincinnati *before* his arrival. The Cincinnati controversy "seems incredibly provincial," he said from New York. "There's just unbelievable right-wing conservatism there." Well, we love you too, Mr. Read—and watch out for the cowflop when you get off the plane.

Howard Read's complaints about provincialism speak volumes about the art world's elitist contempt for its own patrons or potential patrons. Its attitude is that the general public, for which exhibits like the Mapplethorpe show supposedly exist, is obliged to provide tax support for something it is too ignorant to understand and therefore without license to judge. And when the public—the great unwashed, that *very* tiresome and intrusive collection of pinheads and philistines—responds angrily to that attitude by saying, "You want freedom? Then foot the bill yourself. Until then, we're art critics," spokesmen for the arts establishment fall back on some wordy version of the "no one's forcing you to go see the stuff" argument. If it were that simple, the Howard Reads of the world could dispense with *their* principles and simply ship all art to Hartford and Berkeley, since no one is "forcing" them to endure the provincialism of Cincinnati. It is beyond me how supposedly intelligent artists—a whole "community" of them—can ignore a basic fact of life in this country, one that everybody else accepts as self-evident: Spend Americans' money, and they'll stick their nose in your business.

But those opposed to the Mapplethorpe exhibit ignored something too: Tell Americans they aren't or shouldn't be free to say, see, read, or listen to something, and they'll make it a matter of principle to prove you wrong. Thus we had in Cincinnati an exhibit of obscene art (put the quotation marks where you will) that was viewed by a record number of people, many of whom had no interest in either art or obscenity, some of whom had reservations about public funding for any art, much less obscene art, and most of whom didn't like the idea of being told what they were and were not allowed to see. It was a fascinating thing to watch, and I still can't decide whether my feeling about those people is admiration that they had the energy to match their convictions, or bewilderment that they took such pains to experience something that held no inherent interest for them, something many of them pronounced "disgusting."

The ironies didn't stop there. In a move that was both admirable (considering the actual content of the exhibit) and bizarre (considering the supposed content of the exhibit), the CAC decided to bar anyone under the age of 18 from even stepping foot inside the center for the duration of the Mapplethorpe show. With this attempt to display sensitivity to community concerns, the CAC validated those concerns by imposing restrictions on the viewing of the art exhibit that were stricter than those placed on the viewing of an X-rated movie—*if* Cincinnati had X-rated movies. The final irony was that the age restriction was not strictly enforced. I know two 16-year-old girls who breezed into the exhibit with no problem at all. The absurd contradictions of age-restricted art reach their peak when one imagines some irate parent marching into the CAC and shouting, "How dare you allow my underage daughter into an art gallery!"

The review passed on to me by one of those gate-crashing 16-year-olds was that the pretty pictures were pretty, the weird pictures were weird, and the other pictures—*those* pictures—were "not nice, *really*." Among adults who saw the exhibit, opinions were far more burdened by qualification and evasion. ("Personally, I found some of the pictures revolting, but it's not for me to say they shouldn't be shown" was the most frequently reported comment.) But then, adults sense better than kids the national climate of intellectual terrorism that now surrounds the issue of free expression, a climate in which honorable people with honest questions about the artistic value of sadomasochistic and homoerotic photographs are described in some quarters as "convulsive" and in other quarters as book burners. If you doubt it, I refer you first (and again) to the *New York Times*, and then to play-

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wright Edward Albee, who came to the University of Cincinnati as a guest speaker and graciously told his audience that in the Mapplethorpe affair Cincinnati was attempting a "kind of Orwellian thought control." "Democracy is terribly fragile," lectured Mr. Albee. "It must always be on the lookout for the book burners." (What a fool. To watch closeup as Cincinnati thrashed out the issues raised by the Mapplethorpe show was to get a nice little glimpse of how resilient and sturdy and distinctly *un*fragile a thing democracy is.) He also announced, "Art cannot be obscene. Only attitudes toward art can be obscene." If Mr. Albee went on to address the question of whether something obscene can be art, it wasn't reported.

My favorite appraisal of the Mapplethorpe exhibit came from a woman who, seeking *something* positive to say about the experience for which she'd just paid five dollars, arrived at this: "At least there was no group sex." I'll bet you two tickets to a Reds doubleheader that if the depiction of group sex in art is where that woman draws the line, countless arts militants are already deciding they won't rest until they have "challenged" and "disturbed" her with depictions of group sex in art. After all, nothing less than our "fragile democracy" is at stake. And when she discovers that she has given them a lot more leeway than they have given her, that *any* line is evidence of, say, "Orwellian thought control," what will she say then?

"At least there was no group sex." Idiotic pontifications from Edward Albee. It's that kind of stuff that makes me long for a Royko-like voice in Cincinnati, one that can dish it out a little. But that's a silly longing. Even without his recent "rube" jab, Mike Royko and the city of Cincinnati wouldn't last a month together. He would start making fun of the Reds, and then we'd *really* have an uproar. At that point, the *New York Times* would pick up on the story and report that Royko had once made fun of some beloved Berkeley institution "without incident." And then . . . well, have you ever seen an entire city break out in mental hives?

Janet Scott Barlow, who writes from Cincinnati, Ohio, is the author of The Nonpatriotic President: A Survey of the Clinton Years *(Chronicles Press). This article first appeared in the October 1990 issue.*

Letter From Rome

by Andrei Navrozov

Nothing Better to Do

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I have always wanted to spend some time in Rome, for a whole rosary of personal reasons. As with much else in a person's private life, to recount these in print is to expose oneself to public ridicule. Yes, Rome is a wonderful city. Yes, the food is good.

But then in England, where I live, the new Labour government came in to finish what the Tories started. And since another famous fact about Rome is that it has already fallen, I figured that over here my chances of being buried under the Eurorubble were encouragingly smaller. So I moved. Days are now passing like centuries outside my window, to the ringing of church bells and the flashing of Japanese cameras.

The paramount joy in all this is a newfound superficiality. On my terrace, in the suggestively Decembrist sunshine, I have been reading a collection of Russian memoirs from the 1830's. How people knew and valued their cities in those days—Petersburg, Moscow—how well they described every façade, every little bridge they had known since childhood! And of course we have all read such memoirs of London, of Paris, of Vienna, even of New York or San Francisco, written by the natural or adoptive children of those cities with the same tenderness, the same observant devotion.

This, alas, is no longer possible. To know a great city like London or Rome nowadays, to know it by heart and in depth and over the span of a lifetime, is to sustain an emotional injury that would render a sensible man all but mute with indignation and shame. Only a giddy foreigner, a pliant, impressionable, superficial stranger, is ignorant enough not to taste the anti-oxidizing agent in his bottle of bubbly *prosecco*; nor has he met enough cranky old-timers to acquire their inevitable bitterness. He knows nothing of the way things used to be 50, 20, even ten years back. To him, everything is the real thing.

"The knowledge that the world is ending," wrote a Russian writer in the 1920's, "is what distinguishes an individual from a philistine." In retrospect I am beginning to think that this leave of absence from London, a place which during the last 13 years I had learned to use and to love like the great library it is, was really a convoluted means of getting a few months' respite from living the life of an individual.

Of all the countries I have ever visited, Italy is the only place where one can live like a philistine without wearing trainers, reading the *International Herald Tribune*, or degenerating into an animal in other ways. One look in the dining room of a middle-of-the-road hotel anywhere in Europe will remind us that, at the moment of pouring anemic, bluish milk over their bowls of high-fiber cereal, middle-class Swedish, French, or Belgian families look exactly alike; that is to say, they look American. They are ready for life in the United States of Europe, where everything will be "better and more fun," as their predecessors in interest used to sing, not always tunefully, aboard eastbound cattle trains.

By contrast, in Italy, philistine life is possessed of an aesthetic so richly ritualized that a Roman pharmacy owner on a week's skiing holiday with his family in Cortina d'Ampezzo will be mistaken for a serious nobleman among serious noblemen. Neither he nor his wife will go skiing, of course; *hauteur*, like *couture*, will not be ruffled by rude Teutonic winds; instead, they will join the carefully timed round of cocktails and promenades that exhibit their exquisite, almost hypochondriac idleness, his languid wit, and her new furs to fine advantage.

Admittedly the weight of tradition is responsible. The Italian bourgeois had begun to promenade when the aristocracy still fenced and boxed. Now that the middle classes of the world have united, under the colors of Benetton, in Americanism—sport, most conspicuously, and all the attendant trappings of the sporting life—the Italian is the odd man out. His vision of the active life may be centered on the English country house of a century ago, but unlike Ralph Lauren he never ran and sweated to get there in one generation. To the contrary, the Italian simply promenaded until every bourgeois around him turned *gentilhomme*, and now he promenades among them like a great aristocratic original. None of which, incidentally, has deterred Benetton from selling the Brooklyn Bridge to Brooklyn, or at least Brooklyn Heights.

Apart from tradition, which has saved

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the Italians from the embarrassment of ending up like everyone else, another powerful characteristic that humanizes their middle class is a kind of seriousness, a seriousness which at times resembles cheerfulness and at times cheerful resignation. I have already alluded to the image of life which the Americanist set all over the world holds up as a banner of progress, and I allude to it again in this connection. The familiar strangeness of seeing, on the No. 22 bus in central London, a young woman wearing a track suit or a Walkman is explained by the conjecture that she does not enjoy being on the No. 22, indeed that riding it is only a transitory phase of her existence, and that she would gladly swap this for a run in the park or an evening at the local discotheque. Looking around, one may note that just about everyone else on the bus, including the driver and the conductor, shares her anxiety and her sense of displacement.

What is it with people? From the exodus of the Jews from Egypt to a Sotheby's drinks party, everybody wants to be somewhere, if not something, else. You are talking to an old stupid woman with a glass of champagne in her trembling hand, you think you are being polite as a boy scout, you suppose the woman is grateful for the attention, but no! You catch her eyeing the door through which a famous used-car salesman is entering, and before you can murmur something suitable ("Madam, is it not time, now that you are in the frosty autumn of your life, to be thinking of higher things?") she is off like a shot. And for the stupid old woman of the parable, read "everyman," read baker and banker, newspaper editor and lover, bootblack and writer.

A scene of this kind, which is routine in New York, Rockford, or Paris, is almost unobservable in Rome and hilariously inconceivable in a provincial town of Italy. Of course I would not say under oath that there are no waitresses here who are actually critically acclaimed actresses, and no taxi drivers who have had series pilots produced. But what one observes emanating from each individual soul is extreme, almost sacramental seriousness with respect to its predicament at this or that given moment in time. Until it became the mark of the bourgeois, this solemn self-satisfaction used to belong to no particular social group and marked equally the upper and the lower classes throughout Europe. A German grain merchant (see Thomas Mann), a Russian nobleman (see Tolstoy), and an English orphan (see Dickens) all saw their position in the world as reasonably convincing, reasonably convenient, and reasonably permanent. The main exceptions were poets, men with bad gambling debts, and Hans Christian Andersen's little mermaid—all tragic and romantic and worthy, yes, but not 99.9 percent of the population, either.

What I am trying to say is that the seriousness of the Italian way of life, its solemn ritualism and its cheerful acceptance, now accounts for the incredible fact that only in Italy will one see a mother nursing her child or a beggar begging alms or a butcher slicing meat "as if they had nothing better to do." They don't, and in the world as it is today, this is a miracle well worth watching.

Andrei Navrozov is Chronicles' *European correspondent. This article first appeared in the May 1998 issue.*

Letter From the Lower Right

by John Shelton Reed

Still Fighting the Civil War

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The influx of Northern migrants to these parts continues to produce misunderstanding. Some time ago, the good people of Hillsborough, North Carolina, gave up their right to shoot marauding vermin in their own backyards to an official municipal squirrel-shooter. Citizens whose nut trees were being sacked, gardens despoiled, or houses chewed up (it happens) could call police officer William King, who would come over with his .22 and take care of the problem.

Now, according to the *Chapel Hill Observer*, a pushy newcomer has objected to this arrangement. "This is just pagan, to be out there shooting squirrels," says Karen McKinnon. Last November, she took her case to the town council, which responded by hedging the practice about with bureaucratic restrictions. Owners of all adjoining property must now be notified before a squirrel is shot, and the person requesting the shooting must be given a leaflet describing nonlethal methods of squirrel-removal. Am I the only one who finds it weird that it's harder to kill a squirrel than to get an abortion?

McKinnon believes that the long-term solution may lie in importing owls to control the squirrel population, but it's not clear why that's preferable. I think if I were a squirrel I'd prefer a .22 slug in the eye to being torn limb from limb by an owl. In fact, I'd prefer it even though I'm not a squirrel. Moreover, I don't understand why an owl is seen as a natural predator and Officer King is not. But then, like most natives, I don't share Ms. McKinnon's Disneyesque view of rodents. Hillsborough resident Cecil Sanford, brother of our lesser-known U.S. senator, quoted a farmer friend on the subject of squirrels: "They ain't nothing but a rat with a bushy tail."

My solution would be to kill two birds with one stone (as the pagan expression has it): I'd arm welfare recipients and encourage them to forage. They could eat what they shoot, or sell it. Squirrel-based Brunswick stew is $7.00 a bowl at one fancy Chapel Hill restaurant.

* * *

That story illustrates a problem I have, living where I do. I don't want to leave the South, and don't plan to, but I'm afraid it's leaving me. Let me explain.

There's a letter from Robert Frost in which he tells a friend of his plans to move back to New England and get "Yankier and Yankier." That's just about what he did, too, and most of us are glad of it. America's a better place because he did that.

Twenty-odd years ago, living in New York City, my wife and I came to a similar resolve about the South. Unlike poor, tormented Tom Wolfe (the Elder), we knew we could go home again. We did it a *couple* of times a year, and we wanted to do it for good. New York's a great city, but—well, I just had a letter from one of my former students who says she's had enough, too: "It's definitely not a good place for decent, polite Southerners, not even high-strung ones like myself."

But living in the North had changed my idea of where "home" was. I'd come to realize that I could find balm for my Yankee-jangled sensibilities not just in my particular East Tennessee hometown, but 'most anywhere in the South. Driving home, my chronic heartburn always let up somewhere around Hagerstown, Maryland, on old U.S. 11—about

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the same place it started up again on the trip back north.

Walker Percy wrote of a similar experience in *The Last Gentleman*. When Will Barrett and Jamie headed south, they would park their camper at night in Carolina and stroll to a service station or fishing camp or grocery store, where they'd have a beer or fill the tank with spring water or lay in eggs and country butter and grits and slab bacon; then back to the camper, which they'd show off to the storekeeper, he ruminating a minute and: all I got to say is, don't walk off and leave the keys in it—and so on in the complex Southern tactic of assaying a sort of running start, a joke before the joke, ten assumptions shared and a common stance of rhetoric and a whole shared set of special ironies and opposites. He was home. Even though he was hundreds of miles from home and had never been here and it was not even the same here—it was older and more decorous, more tended to and a dream with the past—he was home.

So I finished my studies in New York, shook the Northern dust from my feet, and moved just in time for my first child to get "Durham, North Carolina" on her birth certificate—important to me, if not to her.

But now I look around and find that the North seems to have followed me. Our town and those nearby, like Hillsborough, have recently been flooded with immigrants seeking economic opportunity, gracious living, and year-round golf. I don't blame them. But please don't blame me for being less than wild about this development.

Northerners are nothing new in these parts, and in small numbers they used to provide a pleasant leaven. Some of them worked at fitting in (which isn't all that hard), many more adopted a becoming diffidence, and even the ones who remained defiantly Yankee offered a stimulating counterpoint to the prevailing, easygoing ways. But there was no question whose region we were in.

Sometime recently, though, we crossed a tipping point that's as easy to recognize as it is hard to define. There are now so many newcomers that they're no longer just the seasoning in the stew; they've become a lumpy ingredient in their own right, one that shows no signs of dissolving. People from places like Ohio and Michigan are moving into neighborhoods full of other people from Ohio and Michigan, and they all go down and get the *New York Times* on Sunday. Flannery O'Connor liked to tell a story about an Atlanta real-estate salesman showing a migrant couple around. "You'll like this neighborhood," he says. "There's not a Southerner for miles." I used to find that funnier than I do now.

No offense, Northern folks, but I like the South because it's full of Southerners. You all are fine people, but you make me *tired*. I came here to be with people I don't have to explain things to, you understand? People who share my views about things like squirrels.

We've almost reached the point around here where *Southerners* are the ones who have to worry about fitting in. One of our students, a local boy, complained recently in the college paper that people are always coming up to him and saying "I just love to hear you talk." "Let's get one thing straight," he wrote, "we are in the South. Therefore, I do not have the accent." Besides, it's impolite: "If we were sitting around the beach house in Cape Cod discussing clam chowdah or Uncle Joe's haht cahndishen, I wouldn't stand up and say, 'Hot damn, you boys shore talk funny.' It just wouldn't be gentlemanlike." What really bugged him, though, is what bugs me: "There's something about having to defend my region when I'm still in it that I don't like."

Students aside, Chapel Hill looks more and more like Princeton these days. Some people think that's fine, and not all of them are from New Jersey either. Our local realtors apparently love what's going on, and even some people who aren't making any money off of it seem to have bought the view that it's impolite to complain about the increasing presence of unassimilated Northerners.

Not long ago a reporter from the *Charlotte Observer* asked what I thought about the fact that someone can live in the South now and never have to come to terms with it. I told her I thought it was a shame. Soon thereafter, my long-suffering department chairman got a telephone call from an irate reader, a native North Carolinian (she said) who objected to my opinions or, anyway, to my expressing them. She insisted that I was "still fighting the Civil War" and demanded that he fire me. When he wearily told her that it's too late, since I have tenure, she said she'd take her case to the president of the university and to the governor, if necessary.

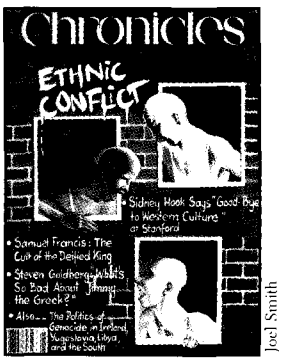
Now, I'm not worried about that; both of those worthies are adept at dealing with cranks, as I have reason to know, having dealt with them in that capacity myself. And there's a nice irony to knowing that the last member of my department whose head was demanded by angry citizens was a gentleman and scholar whose offense was believing 50 years ago that black folks were entitled to be treated like human beings and American citizens. But let's think about that accusation: still fighting the Civil War.

Non-Southerners are never accused of that, no matter what they say about the South. Neither are Southerners who make it clear that they prefer the Northern way. You get charged with that offense if and only if you are a Southerner who would like to see the South stay Southern. And it's a sorry fact that the charge is often filed by other Southerners, like my accuser. Some of us like to joke about suburban Washington being "Occupied Virginia," but let me tell you it's no fun living in Vichy, North Carolina, either.

Look, I don't want to impose Southern ways on the world; I just want to hang on to them in the South. I don't think that one Princeton is too many, just that one is enough. I even feel that way about California: I'm glad it's out there, for all sorts of reasons. If the Great Wen, D.C., were just another unpleasant East Coast city—why, I'd say let it be. It's like food: when I go to New England, I *want* to eat broiled scrod and Indian pudding; I just don't want them on every menu down here, that's all. And I think it would be nice if New Englanders in these parts would eat Brunswick stew and okra, or at least keep their opinions about Southern food to themselves.

If that's still fighting the Civil War—make the most of it.

John Shelton Reed writes from Chapel Hill, North Carolina, which he says New Yorkers will find a great place to visit, but they wouldn't want to live there. This article first appeared in the May 1988 issue.


Chronicles
ETHNIC CONFLICT
• Sidney Hook Says 'Good-Bye to Western Culture' at Stanford
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• Also—The Politics of Genocide in Ireland, Yugoslavia, Libya, and the South
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Racak Revisited

Back in 1994, a major news item proved unfit for publication in any "mainstream" media outlets in the United States. It concerned the possibility—which turned into a virtual certainty—that the Bosnian Muslim government staged the infamous "marketplace massacre" in Sarajevo, killing 66 of its own people. The U.S. government promptly blamed the Serbs. In subsequent months, a host of European papers published articles on the controversy. Lord David Owen and General Sir Michael Rose referred to an American-engineered cover-up. The American public—*Chronicles* readers excepted—remained oblivious.

Plus ça change. . . . In January, America was on the verge (for the second time in four months) of bombing the Serbs because of yet another stage-managed "massacre." This time the venue was the village of Racak, in Kosovo. From New York to Los Angeles, the media went into a state of righteous rage over the discovery of 45 dead Albanians, allegedly "civilians butchered in cold blood." The head of the OSCE observer mission in Kosovo, American diplomat William Walker, immediately blamed the Serbian police. Belgrade's claim that the 45 dead were in fact Kosovo Liberation Army guerrillas killed in a firefight was scornfully rejected as "Serbian propaganda." No attempt at "objective reporting" on Racak was made by any of the major dailies in the United States.

But according to Christophe Chatelot in *Le Monde* ("Were the dead in Racak really massacred in cold blood?" January 21), Walker and the Albanian side gave a "version of this event which does not answer many questions":

> Isn't the massacre of Racak too perfect? . . . The account of two journalists of the Associated Press TV, which filmed the police operation in Racak, contradicts this report. At about 10:00, when they enter the locality behind an armoured vehicle, the village is almost deserted. They progress along the streets under the fire of the gunners of the Kosovo Liberation Army . . . These exchanges of gunfire will last all the time of the intervention, with more or less intensity. It is in the woods that the main combat takes place. The KLA is taken in the siege.

At 3:30 P.M., the report goes on, the police complete their operation and leave the village under sporadic fire from the KLA. The Serbs estimate that there are 15-20 combatants dead on the KLA side. The Albanians come out from their shelters and go down toward the village. Three vehicles of the OSCE Verification Mission arrive. *Le Monde* points out that the Serbian operation "was neither a surprise, nor a secret": Journalists and OSCE observers were encouraged by the Serbs to witness the proceedings before the fighting started and allowed into the village afterward, where they found only four lightly injured civilians. The night falls. With the police and verifiers gone, *Le Monde* reports, the events take an unexpected turn:

> The next morning, journalists and verifiers arrive and, guided by armed KLA fighters who regained the village, they discover the ditch with twenty bodies, mostly men. During the day William Walker arrives and expresses horror at "the crime committed by the Serbian police and the Yugoslav army." But many questions remain unclarified. How could the Serb police gather a group of men, and quietly direct them towards the place of the execution, while they were constantly under the fire of the KLA? How could the ditch at the edge of Racak escape the glance of the inhabitants? . . . And how come the observers, present for more than two hours in this very small village, failed to see the ditch? Why are there only a few cartridge cases around the corpses, and little blood in this sunken lane where 23 people were supposedly shot several times in the head? Weren't the bodies of the Albanians killed in combat by the Serb police, rather, heaped together in the ditch to create a scene of horror to ignite the wrath of public opinion?

In the same vein, Renaud Girard reported in *Le Figaro* ("Massacre under a cloud," January 20) that, "in view of a whole series of confusing facts . . . this matter deserves undivided attention":

> If one considers that an AP television crew was invited as early as 8:30 A.M. to film the operation, it seems that the police had nothing to conceal. The OSCE was also notified about the operation, and they sent two cars to the site. Verifiers spent the entire day on a hill, which offered a full-length view of the village. At 3:30 P.M. the police left the village, taking along a 12.7 mm heavy machine-gun, two automatic rifles, two snipers and some thirty Kalashnikovs, of Chinese manufacture.

Le Figaro also pointed out that the "massacre" was unveiled only the following morning, when the KLA was in full control of the village. They claimed that, on the previous day, police separated women from men, taking the men to the ditch and killing them on the spot:

> The AP TV journalists' testimonies, as well the material they have filmed, give an entirely opposite interpretation of this event. . . . After this, the surrounded KLA members were desperately trying to break through. . . . Maybe the KLA has thus wisely turned its military defeat into a political victory?

A similar account was published in *Die Welt* (January 22) and reported on the BBC World Service and Radio France International, among others. Commenting on the story, *Business Day*, South Africa's equivalent of the *Wall Street Journal*, remarked that "the electronic images beamed nightly into our sitting rooms" are used to dictate the style of foreign policy in the post-communist era (January 26). But who is wagging whom? In the end, journalists and politi-

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cians are merely complementing one another.

There is still hope: According to a BBC News report by Jonathan Duffy (January 27), most people—in Britain, at least—think that both journalists and politicians are liars. According to a major survey, politicians ranked only slightly higher than journalists in terms of trust.

While most of the balanced reporting on Racak has come from the French press, the French are not alone in their resistance to American interventionism on the side of the Muslims in the Balkans. In its main editorial on January 10, Rome's *La Repubblica* stated that the latest crisis was triggered by the Albanians, "who had begun to provoke the Serbian army and police with hit-and-run attacks timed to coincide with the Orthodox Christian Christmas." Three militiamen were killed, and an officer and several soldiers of the Yugoslav regular army were seized.

> This provocation was an escalation whose ultimate objective is not to defeat the Serbs on the ground, but to bring them directly under the bombs of NATO aircraft sent by an Atlantic alliance that the Kosovo Albanians would like to secure as an outright military ally in their liberation struggle. . . . The most significant point, which the Serbs consider inalienable, is their "no" to Kosovo's independence, and in this they seem to enjoy substantial support from several NATO countries.

La Repubblica concluded that the KLA guerrillas will continue their attacks in an attempt to draw NATO into the fighting, but to no avail, since "America's propensity to military intervention against Serbia is not shared by its principal Mediterranean partners in NATO, first and foremost, France and Italy."

The Italians' lack of enthusiasm for the KLA cause may be partly due to an interesting aspect of the Kosovo conflict that the American press has ignored: The guerrillas are financed through an intricate network of Albanians who control the drug market in Italy. As the *Corriere della Sera* reported on January 19:

> Until he was locked up in solitary confinement . . . Agim Gashi—the 35-year-old criminal boss from Pristina and king of the Milan drugs market—supplied his brothers in Kosovo with Kalashnikov rifles, bazookas, and hand grenades. He controlled the heroin market, and at least part of the billions of *lire* he made from it was used to buy weapons for the "resistance" movement of the Albanian Kosovo community. . . . He rallied his Muslim brothers, Turkish heroin suppliers, to deliver the goods during Ramadan—a violation of religious rules for the sake of a more important cause: "to submerge Christian infidels in drugs."

Of course, whether Italy—and the rest of the West, for that matter—may still be described as "Christian" is debatable. Take the United States, for instance, where President Clinton issued the following message on January 19:

> THE WHITE HOUSE, Office of the Press Secretary—For Immediate Release: Warm greetings to Muslims across America and around the world as you mark the end of the holy month of Ramadan and celebrate the festival of Id al-Fitr. The month of fasting that you have just completed demands discipline and a spirit of sacrifice. But it also delivers a profound reward: the opportunity to show people of every faith what is precious about Islam—its charity, its generosity, and its essential humanity. All people in the world are moved by your observance of Ramadan and by the devotion and dignity that make Islam one of the world's great religions. As you welcome the appearance of the new moon and the close of Ramadan, Hillary joins me in extending best wishes for a memorable celebration and for peace, health, and prosperity in the year to come.

While we ponder what happened to the separation of mosque and state in Clinton's America, let us take heart from the fact that, in Europe, political incorrectness is apparently still alive and well. A cartoon superhero—"Captain Euro"—was recently launched to promote the new European currency to children and Internet users. (His adventures can be found on the Internet at *www.captaineuro.com*.) Captain Euro is a handsome male with chiseled features, a ready smile, and abs of steel. His companion is a blonde, blue-eyed bombshell, Europa Helen, a dead ringer for Posh Spice. Together, they fight an evil organization led by a sinister Dr. D. Vider—a Leon Trotsky look-alike—"who seeks to divide Europe and create his own empire." Dr. Vider's comrades include a dark-skinned woman, a gnome-like (whoops, vertically challenged) man, and others who share an unmistakably Levantine appearance.

Although the president of the European Parliament, Jose-Maria Gil-Robles, recently gave an interview to Captain Euro on topics such as the new currency and its impact on the European identity, respectable people are outraged. In England, an organ of the race-relations industry (*Searchlight*) described the cartoon as "an amazingly racist and xenophobic piece of trash."

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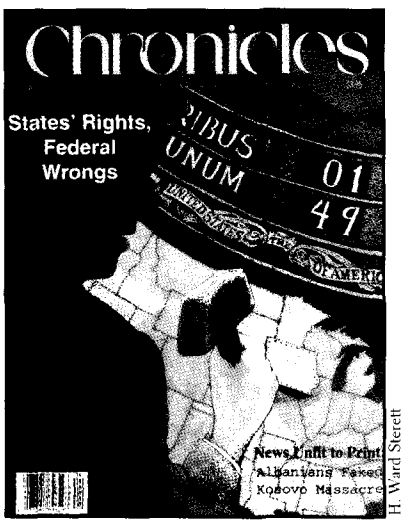
This article first appeared in the April 1999 issue.



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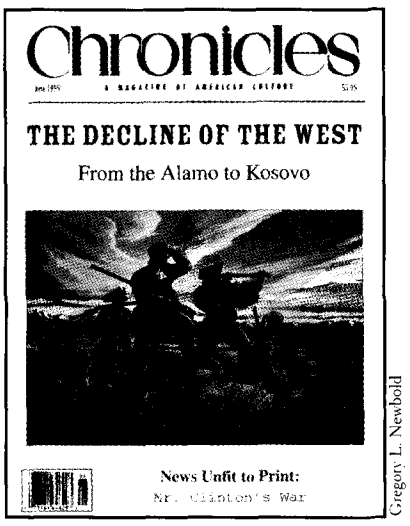

Gregory L. Newbold

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ART

Art Restoration: The Sistine Chapel

by Thomas Molnar

The present controversy around the restoration of the Sistine Chapel's ceiling prompts the following reflections on restorative work in general, and that of our time in particular.

Our age will be known by future historians as one in which all certitudes were questioned, while the True and the Good were on the defensive. Beauty, also tottering, still rallies the largest number of enthusiasts. The onslaughts against it—tasteless monuments, purposeful wrecks in metal and cement in public parks, puzzles on museum and exhibit walls—are violently resented by lovers of art, at least those bold enough to go against popular approval. The restoration work on ancient masterpieces also begins to attract attention because of its increasing abuse.

Paul Valéry spoke of civilizations being mortal; we are now aware that the art of the past, safe from "death," is nevertheless vulnerable to cleansing, the use of new chemicals, to the indiscriminate removal of layers on painting, to retouching, as well as the search for the alleged original lines and colors. Although motivated by good intentions, many restorers are tempted to play the demiurge and "know better" than the work's creator, whether Leonardo, Rembrandt, or Michelangelo. The trouble is that misapplied zeal carries them away, as restorers become competitors against the artist whose work they ought to serve. This is how we get statements like: "Emotional and subjective considerations must not be permitted to intrude upon science!" This by Gianluigi Colalucci, chief restorer now working on the Sistine Chapel.

Before anything else, a cultural misunderstanding should be dispelled: The great masterpieces are not embodied only in the work themselves, as they appear, localized and dated. They have also evolved a life of their own during the centuries or millennia since their coming into existence. The "search for the original" is merely a modern prejudice, although it may look like a reasonable and an attractive notion to which we all are impelled, partly by curiosity, partly by the desire to meet the *illo tempore*. Yet this search may also be an ill-conceived enterprise, considering the probability that the artist himself foresaw the effect of *passing time*, and would be the first to protest against a periodic return to an increasingly hypothetical "original," or to what his work was like in the exact moment he put down his brush or chisel.

Each Gothic cathedral was built over the decades, indeed centuries, by successive patrons, master-masons, teams of architects and workers. It was the common religious inspiration of merging centuries that created unity of conception and style, not this or that master. Appropriately, no one individual signed the work—the final product may not have exactly conformed to the first blueprint. Similarly, Michelangelo planned the *lunettes* and the barrel vault ceiling of the Sistine Chapel to serve as transcendent inspiration at religious ceremonies for many centuries. He knew that what popes and priests would see when looking up and around would not be quite the same in the second decade of the 16th century as in remote future times and generations. More concretely, he knew that there would be the chemical reactions in his materials compounded by candle smoke, the breathing of multitudes, and the climatic and seasonal changes.

What Michelangelo could not know—in contrast to us—is that taste not only changes but may also one day be so corrupted that it would try to erase *time*. Watch indeed the contemporary infatuation with hermeneutics—in plain language, the search for hidden motives (like "investigative journalism" in Washington): What did the writer, artist, scholar, thinker *really* want to express? Did he know exactly what he wanted, was he aware that it was not he who wanted it, but his social class, degree of wealth, his race, his hidden interests, the structure of the language he spoke? The game around the "masters of suspicion" fascinates our contemporaries, the Merleau-Pontys, the Gadamers, the Freuds, the Ricoeurs. Was Shakespeare Shakespeare? Did Leonardo paint a self-portrait under the features of Mona Lisa? And now: Was Michelangelo responsible only for the fresco painted on the walls, while an unknown super-Michelangelo painted, decades later, the musculature, the gradation of light and shadow, the wrestling of God and man?

The theory about this mysterious Other, which in a way authorizes the present restorers to erase perceived non-Michelangellian layers and layers of grime, is flatly contradicted by art-chronicler number one, Giorgio Vasari, the painter's contemporary. When in Rome, Vasari writes, Michelangelo painted every day, rain or shine, in great discomfort from constantly looking up. He remained on his 60-foot-high scaffolding night or day, eating and sleeping there, "but in the ardor of labor he felt no fatigue and cared for no discomfort." More, he talked back to the pope (Julius II, no namby-pamby, or a "Hamlet"), who threatened to have him cast down if he did not finish the job by the agreed date. "I shall finish," Michelangelo replied, "when I am satisfied in my artistic sense." And so he did.

All this explains why a work of art today (this is also true of music as new instruments are invented) is not quite the same as it was in its creator's atelier, when it was blessed by qualities of survival. Time does effect some erosion and decrepitude, but it also brings maturation. Most importantly, not every age should regard itself as competent to restore great art. It is one thing to rebuild baroque Dresden after its barbaric destruction, quite another to meddle with the wear and tear of centuries. Contemporary taste, working with surviving original blueprints of public buildings, streets, or façades, cannot do much harm; but looking at the Sistine frescoes *before* and *after*, we become painfully aware that contemporary taste favors the style of posters, large, brutally colored surfaces, geometric designs. The tourist wants to see quickly and superficially and carry home a bundle of snapshots. In the Sistine Chapel where he dislocates his neck in the effort to look upward (this, the crowds of tourists, not even a Michelangelo could foresee), the restorers may have wished—am I guilty of hermeneutics?—to alleviate the neck-breaking exercise. At any rate, the

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cleansed sections appear splashy, ready to be seen from a distance.

Is this still Michelangelo? That is a hard question to answer. Art critic Alexander Eliot, mural painter Frank Mason, Prof. James Beck of Columbia, art dealer Roland Feldman, plus the 15 most prominent American painters who signed a letter of protest to the Vatican, agree that the present restoration is guilty of what I would call "puritanism," the earlier-mentioned impulse to erase time. To which the chief theoretician of the Sistine restoration, Fabrizio Mancinelli, answered that Michelangelo, a Florentine, was trained in the rapid work that the fresco painting demands. Since the fresco dried in one day ("*giornata*"), the artist could move on to the next. The answer to this argument is that Michelangelo was working in Rome (he even rejected advice by his fellow Florentines who had come to visit him) in whose damp and marshy air he knew he had to use another technique and paint slowly, repeatedly, devotedly, expressing his real vision *a secco*. . . . The fresco was only a working outline, the struggle of genius was superadded. There is proof, even outside Vasari's description, that the master worked slowly, with a light attached to his hat, "his loins penetrating to his paunch"—these are his own words—"his rump a crupper as a counterweight." He painted over and over, reworked, and in the process he renewed Renaissance painting. How are we to conclude that this daring man would have been content with bare sketches, that he would have refrained from his titanic struggle with angels, saints, sibyls, and prophets?

Let us repeat that the times are not propitious for large-scale restoration except when mere technical know-how is involved, as in the protection of the Parthenon. And our times are not propitious for restoration because they are not creative times. Our contemporaries believe in nothing—how could they think along the lines of great creators, whose art, no matter how perfected, was in their minds only a reflection of the divine? There is something typical and symbolic, certainly not incongruous, in the fact that the restoration is partly paid for by the Nippon Television Network Corporation (three million dollars), in exchange for rights to film the process. Commercialism does not just mix here with beauty and spirituality; it obscenely interferes with both, while strengthening the Restorers' Faction. Let's face it, the latter have the support of an international pressure group of museum directors heavily engaged in restorations (the art must shine to attract visitors and donors, mustn't it?), art critics, professors, publishers. . . .

A compromise? Perhaps; slow work, frequent interruptions in order to survey the effects before they became irreversible. One illustration: Restoration on Leonardo's *Last Supper* in Milan is planned to take 12 years; the much vaster Sistine Chapel is supposed to be completed in the same amount of time. There is an evident rush. Yet why should the domain of beauty not also be subject to moral prudence? Moral prudence combined with aesthetic reverence would reassure those who want not only to restore, but also to preserve.

Thomas Molnar is a professor of French at Brooklyn College. This article first appeared in the July 1987 issue.

HISTORY

Lies, Damned Lies, and Fossils

by Philip Jenkins

Not for the first time in recent years, American history is the subject of a ferocious political controversy, which ultimately grows out of the national obsession with race. What is new about this particular battle is the chronological setting: We are not dealing here with the New Deal, Reconstruction, or the slave trade, but with a period inconceivably distant, before there was a United States; indeed, long before human beings had dreamed of building pyramids or ziggurats. Recent archaeological discoveries have thrown doubt upon everything we thought we knew about human origins in the New World, blowing large holes in the scientific orthodoxy of the last few decades. It is not surprising to find the new facts challenged by a rear guard of traditionally minded scholars, whose whole careers were invested in an older model, but what is alarming is that the federal government and even its Armed Forces have become utterly committed to yesterday's orthodoxy, to the extent of resorting to chicanery and intimidation: In short, the Clinton administration has decided to declare war on American archaeology. Even more repugnant, it is doing so in pursuit of doctrines of racial purity. How exactly did we get into such a moral and intellectual quagmire?

To understand this mess, we need to appreciate the traditional view of how human beings reached the Americas. From the 1920's, the standard view was that the New World had no human population before about 15,000 years ago, when hunters following big game trekked across the land bridge which then united Siberia and Alaska. . . . They rapidly spread across the continent, leaving as traces stone spearheads of the sort first discovered at Clovis, New Mexico. Other population waves came in over the following millennia, but always over the land bridge, so that all Indian populations in the Americas, north and south, ultimately derived from these Siberian migrants.

The Clovis theory of New World settlement worked magnificently so long as the amount of contrary evidence was small enough to be controlled and, above all, no material evidence of earlier settlement appeared. Partly, this was achieved by an unconscious conspiracy: Archaeologists now freely admit that when they reached Clovis levels at a particular site, they simply stopped digging, because they knew in their hearts that nothing else could be there. Unfortunately, there almost certainly was older material which was simply ignored. In the last decade or two, an intellectual revolution has ensued that indicates, first, that people have been in the Americas for much longer than we had hitherto thought: probably for 30,000 or 40,000 years, and possibly for 50,000 or 60,000. Second, the remains of these ancient people are, frankly, in the wrong places. If they were all Siberian newcomers, it is odd that their ancient remains should be turning up more in South America than in the north, as much in the eastern half of the United States as in the west.

Trying to explain these inconvenient facts, scholars are now proposing an array of theories which, had they been proposed 20 years ago, would have been as respectable as the idea that our ancestors all landed in UFOs as part of a high-school science project on Alpha Centauri. If we find people here before 15,000 years ago, we can no longer assume a land-bridge route and must entertain the idea that the first Americans came by boat, probably cruising along the coasts,

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and perhaps in quest of marine mammals. Instead of Siberians, they would have been more akin to the people we now find in various parts of East Asia and Polynesia or—and this is a deeply controversial idea—in Western Europe. One explosive theory suggests that the first Americans came from what is now Spain and France, bearing with them the kind of "Solutrean" culture which then prevailed in those regions. In this model, settlers would have coasted along the frozen shores of the North Atlantic via Iceland and Greenland, entering the New World through Labrador. Obviously, the people we call "Indians" appeared at some point, but either they were one group among many, or else they were late arrivals. Gradually, they displaced or (more likely) assimilated the older populations, whom we might call the true "Native" Americans.

Contributing to the demolition of the Clovis model is a small but quite devastating assemblage of anthropological evidence, in the form of ancient skeletons. The most celebrated is the fairly complete skeleton of a man found at Kennewick, Washington, in 1996 and dated to around 9,000 years before the present, but other important examples include the astonishing Spirit Cave mummy in Utah, which seems to have had brownish-red hair. None of the most ancient human remains in the Americas even vaguely fits a Siberian pattern, nor do any show a resemblance to American Indians. The oldest humans found in the Americas were characterized by long skulls and narrow faces.

At this point, we can see why the new discoveries are so troubling to American Indians, and hence to American theories of race. For Indians, the sense that they have always been here is fundamental to their whole belief system, and, often, religious values: White Americans pay homage to this idea when we use the term "Native Americans." In some sense, Indians obviously have occupied the Americas far longer than the descendants of the British or Germans or Italians, but some Indian advocates take this "native" idea to unconscionable extremes. A whole school of "Native Creationism" holds that Indian creation myths are literally correct in asserting that particular tribes really did originate in the areas of North America which they claimed, and that scientific stories of geological change and human evolution are just another white man's lie (though why the white man would have invented ancestral origins in Africa remains unclear). The best-known advocate of this radical position is Vine DeLoria, Jr., author of a silly farrago of misinformation and special pleading entitled *Red Earth, White Lies* (1995). A milder form of the creationist idea holds that particular tribes have "always been" more or less where they first appear in the historical record, and that they have "always" venerated particular mountains, rivers, or natural features in that location. This autochthonous claim is even made by tribes that we know perfectly well moved to their present location relatively recently: The Navajo arrived in their southwestern homeland around the time that Columbus was setting sail, while the Lakota/Sioux probably had not even seen the Black Hills of Dakota before the 19th century. Nevertheless, modern activists hold that the respective sacred landscapes really have belonged to those tribes since time immemorial, and anyone who claims to the contrary is a damned Indian-hater. We can imagine the distress with which Indians regard claims that their ancestors were relatively late arrivals who undertook their own particular kind of ancient ethnic cleansing, and perhaps even displaced European predecessors.

Indian rhetoric that "we have always been here" has a strong appeal not just for the usual liberal constituency, suffused in *Dances With Wolves* sentimentality, but also for any impartial student of American history who can appreciate that Indians frequently have been treated very, very badly by white newcomers, sometimes to the point of diabolical savagery. A substantial feeling of white guilt is understandable, and it has found expression in federal laws designed to prevent a repetition of past atrocities. The problem is that some of these well-intentioned laws now create a critical conflict between the soundly attested findings of objective science and what we can only call "archaeological correctness."

The most important measure in this regard is the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) of 1990, which was designed to prevent the kind of ghoulish exploitation of Indian skeletons which had been commonplace in earlier decades. Under the law, Indian bones which had long been gathering dust in various museums were to be restored to their tribes of origin, and special obligations were laid upon archaeologists who might come upon such remains. Any "Native American cultural items" found on federal land were to be restored to "the lineal descendants of the Native American," or, where that could not be determined, to the tribe on whose land these remains were found. In cases of controversy, a claim could be staked by "the Indian tribe that is recognized as aboriginally occupying the area in which the objects were discovered." The law thus institutionalizes not just one but a whole series of scholarly orthodoxies which were already shaky in 1990 and have now all but disintegrated: namely, that any pre-Columbian material remains are by definition American Indian; and, moreover, that particular tribes are "aboriginal," that they have been in that precise area since time immemorial (or, as some would say, since the Creation).

The effect on the study of ancient origins has been catastrophic. Indian activists can protest all they like at scholarly conferences proposing new theories of early American settlement, but with NAGPRA behind them, they can directly affect—or rather, sabotage—the course of scientific discovery. The effect of NAGPRA is evident from a series of cases in which scientists have been prevented from examining ancient bones which clearly manifest non-Indian features; in some cases, remains have been handed over to local tribes for clandestine reburial in places where they will never again be polluted by the hands of white scholars. Such concealment has been the fate of crucial remains from Minnesota, while the skeleton of the 11,000-year-old Buhl Woman from Idaho was promptly handed over to the Shoshone-Bannock tribe and is, in effect, lost forever to science. The law has forbidden proper investigation of the Spirit Cave mummy: The local Paiute tribe is demanding that body, too.

The present scholarly battleground is the Kennewick skeleton, about which much has already been learned, but the principal finding is that (like the Buhl and Spirit Cave skeletons) it represents a thoroughly non-Indian body type. Despite early reports that the skull was European in nature, the best evidence now suggests Polynesian parallels. Other obvious avenues of research suggest themselves, particularly DNA testing, but the time and opportunity for study is strictly limited because of federal law. The skeleton is pre-Columbian; therefore, it is Indian; therefore, it belongs to the tribe

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that has "always" occupied that region—or at least, that has been there in historic times. Despite all evidence to the contrary, if Kennewick Man died on what eventually became lands of a particular tribe, he must have been an ancestor of that tribe.

The Kennewick saga is depressing in the extreme. Within weeks of the skeleton's discovery, it was in the custody of the Army Corps of Engineers, which made it clear that, as in all such cases, it was going to return the bones forthwith to its proper and natural owners—the neighboring Indian tribes. The Corps was prevented only by the legal intervention of archaeologists, supported by a quirky body of Nordic racial theorists called the Asatru Folk Assembly, who claimed Kennewick Man as a relative. Meanwhile, intimidated by NAGPRA, neither the Corps nor the Department of the Interior did anything with the bones: God forbid they should undertake any kind of research.

The battle over "Mr. Kennewick" has since worked its way through the courts and the federal bureaucracy; at every stage, officialdom has made no secret of its desire to give the bones back to their putative Indian owners. In the process, the U.S. Army has pulled such amazing stunts as burying the site with dirt and boulders and planting trees over the area, in effect wantonly destroying a crucial archaeological monument and making it impossible to deduce anything about the skeleton's context. Supposedly, it was operating in response to "concern" from the White House, which normally does not express such passion about technical disputes in the realm of archaeology. Other portions of the skeleton have already been "lost," which, in terms of its historical importance, is akin to "misplacing" a copy of the Declaration of Independence. At the start of this year, the Justice Department determined that Kennewick Man was a Native American, on the grounds of his age: The bones were 9,000 years old, a date which somehow "eliminated theories" that he could be either Asian or European. Since only Indians were here at that point, the bones were Indian, Q.E.D. At the time of this writing, the disposal of the bones remains unclear, but we should expect the worst. We can also wonder whether federal authorities will permit any future embarrassments of this sort, so that comparable finds over the next few years are likely to be, literally and figuratively, buried immediately.

. . . [F]or all its good intentions, NAGPRA has become a deeply dangerous law, a warrant for obscurantism and vandalism—in short, a public scandal. If even the Kennewick disaster does not force us to change the law, we might as well give up any hope for studying the archaeology of the Americas and just do what the federal government does: rely uncritically on Indian creation myths.

Philip Jenkins is Distinguished Professor of History and Religious Studies at Pennsylvania State University. This article first appeared in the April 2000 issue.

POLITICS

Repudiating the National Debt

by Murray N. Rothbard

Before the Reagan era, conservatives were clear about how they felt about deficits and the public debt: a balanced budget was good, and deficits and the public debt were bad, piled up by free-spending Keynesians and socialists, who absurdly proclaimed that there was nothing wrong or onerous about the public debt. In the famous words of the left-Keynesian apostle of "functional finance," Professor Abba Lerner, there is nothing wrong with the public debt because "we owe it to ourselves." In those days, at least, conservatives were astute enough to realize that it made an enormous amount of difference whether—slicing through the obfuscatory collective nouns—one is a member of the "we" (the burdened taxpayer) or of the "ourselves" (those living off the proceeds of taxation).

Since Reagan, however, intellectual-political life has gone topsy-turvy. Conservatives and allegedly "free-market" economists have turned handsprings trying to find new reasons why "deficits don't matter," why we should all relax and enjoy the process. Perhaps the most absurd argument of Reaganomists was that we should not worry about growing public debt because it is being matched on the federal balance sheet by an expansion of public "assets." Here was a new twist on free-market macroeconomics: Things are going well because the value of government assets is rising! In that case, why not have the government nationalize all assets outright? Reaganomists, indeed, came up with every conceivable argument for the public debt *except* the phrase of Abba Lerner, and I am convinced that they did not recycle that phrase because it would be difficult to sustain with a straight face at a time when *foreign* ownership of the national debt is skyrocketing. Even apart from foreign ownership, it is far more difficult to sustain the Lerner thesis than before; in the late 1930's, when Lerner enunciated his thesis, total federal interest payments on the public debt were one billion dollars; now they have zoomed to $200 billion, the third-largest item in the federal budget, after the military and Social Security: The "we" are looking ever shabbier compared to the "ourselves."

To think sensibly about the public debt, we first have to go back to first principles and consider debt in general. Put simply, a *credit transaction* occurs when C, the creditor, transfers a sum of money (say $1,000) to D, the debtor, in exchange for a promise that D will repay C in a year's time the principal plus interest. If the agreed interest rate on the transaction is ten percent, then the debtor obligates himself to pay in a year's time $1,100 to the creditor. This repayment completes the transaction, which, in contrast to a regular sale, takes place over time.

So far, it is clear that there is nothing "wrong" with private debt. As with any private trade or exchange on the market, both parties to the exchange benefit, and no one loses. But suppose that the debtor is foolish, gets himself in over his head, and then finds that he can't repay the sum he had agreed on? This, of course, is a risk incurred by debt, and the debtor had better keep his debts down to what he can surely repay. But this is not a problem of debt alone. *Any* consumer may spend foolishly; a man may blow his entire paycheck on an expensive trinket and then find that he can't feed his family. So consumer foolishness is hardly a problem confined to debt alone. But there is one crucial difference: If a man gets in over his head and he can't pay, the creditor suffers too, because the debtor has failed to return the creditor's property. In a profound sense, the debtor who fails to repay the $1,100 owed to the creditor has stolen property that belongs to the creditor; we have here not simply a civil debt, but a tort, an aggression against another's property.

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In earlier centuries, the insolvent debtor's offense was considered grave, and unless the creditor was willing to "forgive" the debt out of charity, the debtor continued to owe the money plus accumulating interest, plus penalty for continuing nonpayment.

As early as the 17th century, however, governments began sobbing about the plight of the unfortunate debtors, ignoring the fact that the insolvent debtors had gotten themselves into their own fix, and they began to subvert their own proclaimed function of enforcing contracts. Bankruptcy laws were passed which increasingly, let the debtors off the hook and prevented the creditors from obtaining their own property. Theft was increasingly condoned, improvidence was subsidized, and thrift was hobbled. Modern utilitarian neoclassical economists see nothing wrong with any of this; the market, after all, "adjusts" to these changes in the law. It is true that the market can adjust to almost anything, but so what? Hobbling creditors means that interest rates rise permanently, to the sober and honest as well as the improvident; but why should the former be taxed to subsidize the latter? But there are deeper problems with this utilitarian attitude. It is the same amoral claim, from the same economists, that there is nothing wrong with rising crime against residents or storekeepers of the inner cities. The market, they assert, will adjust and discount for such high crime rates, and therefore rents and housing values will be lower in the inner-city areas. So everything will be taken care of. But what sort of consolation is *that*? And what sort of justification for aggression and crime?

In a just society, then, only voluntary forgiveness by creditors would let debtors off the hook; otherwise, bankruptcy laws are an unjust invasion of the property rights of creditors. . . .

In a free-market economy that respects property rights, the volume of private debt is self-policed by the necessity to repay the creditor, since no Papa Government is letting you off the hook.

Most people, unfortunately, apply the same analysis to public debt as they do to private. If sanctity of contracts should rule in the world of private debt, shouldn't it be equally as sacrosanct in public debt? Shouldn't public debt be governed by the same principles as private? The answer is no, even though such an answer may shock the sensibilities of most people. The reason is that the two forms of debt-transaction are totally different. If I borrow money from a mortgage bank, I have made a contract to transfer my money to a creditor at a future date; in a deep sense, he is the true owner of the money at that point, and if I don't pay I am robbing him of his just property. But when *government* borrows money, it does not pledge its own money; its own resources are not liable. Government commits not *its own* life, fortune, and sacred honor to repay the debt, but ours. This is a horse, and a transaction, of a very different color.

For unlike the rest of us, government sells no productive good or service and therefore earns nothing. It can only get money by looting our resources through taxes, or through the hidden tax of legalized counterfeiting known as "inflation." There are some exceptions, of course, such as when the government sells stamps to collectors or carries our mail with gross inefficiency, but the overwhelming bulk of government revenues is acquired through taxation or its monetary equivalent. . . .

The public debt transaction, then, is very different from private debt. . . . The government gets the money by tax-coercion; and the public creditors, far from being innocents, know full well that their proceeds will come out of that selfsame coercion. In short, public creditors are willing to hand over money to the government now in order to receive a share of tax loot in the future. This is the opposite of a free market, or a genuinely voluntary transaction. . . . Both parties . . . are making agreements about other people's property, and both deserve the back of our hand. The public credit transaction is not a genuine contract that need be considered sacrosanct, any more than robbers parceling out their shares of loot in advance should be treated as some sort of sanctified contract.

Any melding of public debt into a private transaction must rest on the common but absurd notion that taxation is really "voluntary," and that whenever the government does anything, "we" are willingly doing it.

Morality and economic utility generally go hand in hand. Contrary to Alexander Hamilton, who spoke for a small but powerful clique of New York and Philadelphia public creditors, the national debt is *not* a "national blessing." The annual government deficit, plus the annual interest payment that keeps rising as the total debt accumulates, increasingly channels scarce and precious private savings into wasteful government boondoggles, which "crowd out" productive investments. Establishment economists, including Reaganomists, cleverly fudge the issue by arbitrarily labeling virtually all government spending as "investments," making it sound as if everything is fine and dandy because savings are being productively "invested." In reality, however, government spending only qualifies as "investment" in an Orwellian sense; government actually spends on behalf of the "consumer goods" and desires of bureaucrats, politicians, and their dependent client groups. Government spending, therefore, rather than being "investment," is consumer spending of a peculiarly wasteful and unproductive sort, since it is indulged not by producers but by a parasitic class that is living off, and increasingly weakening, the productive private sector. . . .

Deficits and a mounting debt . . . are a growing and intolerable burden on the society and economy, both because they raise the tax burden and increasingly drain resources from the productive to the parasitic, counterproductive, "public" sector. . . .

It is for all these reasons that the Jeffersonians and Jacksonians . . . hated and reviled the public debt. Indeed, the national debt was paid off twice in American history, the first time by Thomas Jefferson and the second, and undoubtedly the last time, by Andrew Jackson.

Unfortunately, paying off a national debt that will soon reach four trillion dollars would quickly bankrupt the entire country. . . . Another way, and almost as devastating, a way to pay off the public debt would be to print four trillion dollars of new money—either in paper dollars or by creating new bank credit. This method would be extraordinarily inflationary, and prices would quickly skyrocket, ruining all groups whose earnings did not increase to the same extent, and destroying the value of the dollar. . . . Inflation, then, is an underhanded and terribly destructive way of indirectly repudiating the public debt; destructive because it ruins the currency unit, which individuals and businesses depend upon for calculating all their economic decisions.

I propose, then, a seemingly drastic but actually far less destructive way of paying off the public debt at a single blow: outright debt repudiation. Consider this question: Why should the poor, battered citizens of Russia or Poland or

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the other ex-communist countries be bound by the debts contracted by their former communist masters? In the communist situation, the injustice is clear: that citizens struggling for freedom and for a free-market economy should be taxed to pay for debts contracted by the monstrous former ruling class. But this injustice only differs by degree from "normal" public debt. For, conversely, why should the communist government of the Soviet Union have been bound by debts contracted by the czarist government they hated and overthrew? And why should we, struggling American citizens of today, be bound by debts created by a past ruling elite who contracted these debts at our expense? One of the cogent arguments against paying blacks "reparations" for past slavery is that we, the living, were not slaveholders. Similarly, we the living did not contract for either the past or the present debts incurred by the politicians and bureaucrats in Washington.

Although largely forgotten by historians and by the public, repudiation of public debt is a solid part of the American tradition. The first wave of repudiation of state debt came during the 1840's, after the panics of 1837 and 1839. Those panics were the consequence of a massive inflationary boom fueled by the Whig-run Second Bank of the United States. Riding the wave of inflationary credit, numerous state governments, largely those run by the Whigs, floated an enormous amount of debt, most of which went into wasteful public works (euphemistically called "internal improvements") and into the creation of inflationary banks. Outstanding public debt by state governments rose from $26 million to $170 million during the decade of the 1830's. Most of these securities were financed by British and Dutch investors.

During the deflationary 1840's succeeding the panics, state governments faced repayment of their debt in dollars that were now more valuable than the ones they had borrowed. Many states, now largely in Democratic hands, met the crisis by repudiating these debts, either totally or partially by scaling down the amount in "readjustments." . . . As in every debt repudiation, the result was to lift a great burden from the backs of the taxpayers in the defaulting and repudiating states.

Apart from the moral or sanctity-of-contract argument against repudiation that we have already discussed, the standard economic argument is that such repudiation is disastrous, because who, in his right mind, would lend again to a repudiating government? But the effective counterargument has rarely been considered: Why *should* more private capital be poured down government ratholes? It is precisely the drying up of future public credit that constitutes one of the main arguments *for* repudiation, for it means beneficially drying up a major channel for the wasteful destruction of the savings of the public. What we want is abundant savings and investment in private enterprises, and a lean, austere, low-budget, minimal government. The people and the economy can only wax fat and prosperous when their government is starved and puny.

The next great wave of state debt repudiation came in the South after the blight of Northern occupation and Reconstruction had been lifted. Eight Southern states . . . proceeded, during the late 1870's and early 1880's under Democratic regimes, to repudiate the debt foisted upon their taxpayers by the corrupt and wasteful carpetbag Radical Republican governments under Reconstruction.

So what can be done now? The current federal debt is $3.5 trillion. Approximately $1.4 trillion, or 40 percent, is owned by one or another agency of the federal government. It is ridiculous for a citizen to be taxed by one arm of the federal government (the IRS), to pay interest and principal on debt owned by another agency of the federal government. It would save the taxpayer a great deal of money, and spare savings from further waste, to cancel that debt outright. The alleged debt is simply an accounting fiction that provides a mask over reality and furnishes a convenient means for mulcting the taxpayer. Thus, most people think that the Social Security Administration takes their premium and accumulates it, perhaps by sound investment, and then "pays back" the "insured" citizen when he turns 65. Nothing could be further from the truth. There is no insurance, and there is no "fund," as there indeed must be in any system of *private* insurance. The federal government simply takes the Social Security "premiums" (taxes) of the young person, spends them in the general expenditures of the Treasury, and then, when the person turns 65, taxes someone else to pay the "insurance benefit." Social Security, perhaps the most revered institution in the American polity, is also the greatest single racket. It's simply a giant Ponzi scheme controlled by the federal government. But this reality is masked by the Social Security Administration's purchase of government bonds, with the Treasury then spending these funds on whatever it wishes. But the fact that the SSA has government bonds in its portfolio, and collects interest and payment from the American taxpayer, allows it to masquerade as a legitimate insurance business.

Canceling federal agency-held bonds, then, reduces the federal debt by 40 percent. I would advocate going on to repudiate the entire debt outright, and let the chips fall where they may. The glorious result would be an immediate drop of $200 billion in federal expenditures, with at least the fighting chance of an equivalent cut in taxes.

But if this scheme is considered too Draconian, why not treat the federal government as any private bankrupt is treated (forgetting about Chapter 11)? The government is an organization, so why not liquidate the assets of that organization and pay the creditors (the government bondholders) a pro-rata share of those assets? This solution would cost the taxpayer nothing, and, once again, relieve him of $200 billion in annual interest payments. The United States government should be forced to disgorge its assets, sell them at auction, and then pay off the creditors accordingly. What government assets? There are a great deal of assets, from TVA to the national lands to various structures such as the Post Office. The massive CIA headquarters at Langley, Virginia, should raise a pretty penny for enough condominium housing for the entire work force inside the Beltway. . . . This combination of repudiation and privatization would go a long way to reducing the tax burden, establishing fiscal soundness, and desocializing the United States.

In order to go this route, however, we first have to rid ourselves of the fallacious mindset that conflates public and private, and that treats government debt as if it were a productive contract between two legitimate property owners.

The late Murray N. Rothbard was a professor of economics at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, and vice president for academic affairs at the Ludwig von Mises Institute. A longer version of this article first appeared in the June 1992 issue.

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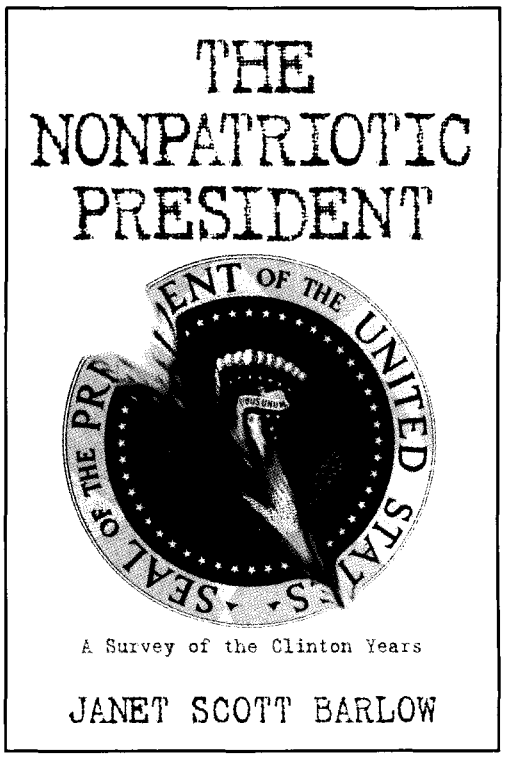

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—From the Introduction by William Murchison of the *Dallas Morning News*

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by George McCartney

Resurrecting the Third Man

Forget the Dark Side. Darth Sidious? No more convincing than Bela Lugosi flitting about an Abbott and Costello travesty. For the real thing, you'll have to visit your local revival house when *The Third Man* shows up. Although filmed in black and white without special effects, its evocation of evil is infinitely more unsettling than anything Industrial Light and Magic has ever served up.

The Third Man turns 50 this year, and to celebrate the occasion, Rialto Pictures has restored and re-released director Carol Reed's brilliant adaptation of Graham Greene's narrative of foreign intrigue. It's being distributed nationwide throughout the summer.

Seeing the film in 35 mm projected on a full-size screen reveals its intentions with far greater clarity than video possibly could. To interpret Greene's vision of a world without sure moral footing, Reed employed a few simple strategies that lose most of their impact on the small screen. He shot many of his scenes on an angle so that tables, chairs, buildings, and actors always seem on the verge of tumbling from the frame. He chose to film the narrative's death dance of innocence and duplicity in high-contrast black and white so that characters are nearly invisible one moment and blindingly luminous the next as they slip in and out of shadows, an effect that would be practically impossible to recreate in today's Technicolor world. Then there is the restored soundtrack. Hearing it, you can appreciate why *The Third Man* theme became a number-one seller when it was released as a record in 1949. Anton Karas's sinuous and insinuating zither perfectly complements the film's intrigue.

The story line is standard-issue Greene, which is a very high standard indeed. It's a tale of benighted innocence rescued by a timely dose of withering disillusionment. Holly Martins is the innocent, an American lost in an all-too-experienced post-World War II Europe. He's played with intrepid dimness by Joseph Cotten, whose plodding, phlegmatic manner perfectly suits the role. Martins, a writer of pulp Western novelettes, comes to Vienna to see his old chum, Harry Lime, a boyishly mischievous Orson Welles, whose penchant for scene-stealing is, for once, entirely appropriate. As Lime, Welles is meant to be both a practiced charmer and an unconscionable betrayer.

The Third Man

Produced by Alexander Korda and David O. Selznick
Directed by Carol Reed
Screenplay by Graham Greene
Released by London Films
Re-released by Rialto Pictures

When Martins arrives in Vienna, an occupied and thoroughly demoralized city policed by the four Allied powers, he discovers that his friend has died in questionable circumstances. When he decides to investigate, he's thwarted at every turn by Major Calloway, head of the British security forces. Trevor Howard plays Calloway as a decent man soured by the corruption he's forced to deal with. He informs Martins that Lime was "the worst racketeer to make a dirty living in this city." Lime's racket was unusually vile. Stealing penicillin from the Allies' military hospitals, he diluted it and then sold it to an unsuspecting Austrian public, knowing full well he was rendering the drug harmful and often lethal, especially when used on children.

Martins doesn't believe Calloway's charge. As a hack writer in the Zane Grey mode, he's convinced he can distinguish the good guys from the bad at a glance, and he's thoroughly convinced Lime is a white hatter. He angrily declares his intention to "get to the bottom of this." Exasperated by such Yankee innocence, the world-weary major retorts, "Death's at the bottom of everything, Martins. Leave death to the professionals."

Calloway tosses off the remark merely to put a fool in his place, but his words prescribe the medicine Martins needs to cure his self-infected, self-important innocence. In Greene's world, moral responsibility begins with the recognition of our common mortality, an awareness that has the power to dissolve the presumed differences to which we obstinately cling. It's difficult to nurture self-aggrandizing fantasies by the graveside.

Reed visualizes this theme with two images: a cemetery path and a Ferris wheel. He begins and ends the film at gravesites. This gives him the opportunity to shoot a leaf-littered, tree-lined cemetery path straight down its center, forcing us to contemplate the convergence of its parallel lines as they recede to their vanishing point. It's the very image of mortality, right down to the autumn leaves which Reed had his crew throw into the scene from ladders placed just outside camera range. The path announces our destiny. We're all walking along it, each step irreversibly shaping our identity. We take our decisions—good, bad, and indifferent—inexorably to the grave.

Against this somber image stands Lime's frivolous emblem, the amusement park Ferris wheel on which he takes Martins for a ride—in more ways than one. Lime, of course, is very much alive, having faked his death by using the corpse of a former accomplice. He is, ironically, the "third man" Martins has been searching for, the man who helped carry the dead body from the accident site and who, Martins had thought, might be able to solve what seemed an impenetrable mystery. Indeed, Lime does just that, only to produce a more profound one: the mystery of evil.

Like Martins, Lime is childish, but his

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childishness doesn't express itself in naive heroism. Instead, he operates on one principle only: heedless self-interest. The Ferris wheel expresses him perfectly. Unlike the cemetery path, it has no beginning or end. For Lime, life is a circular series of amusements, swirling about him as he stands, a bemused ringmaster, at its center. From this position, he coolly gauges the value of other people by one criterion only: the degree to which they either help or hinder his comfort. Although charming, he is a monster who attracts people and then uses them remorselessly to advance his own interests. When the Brits seem to be closing in on him, he has no compunction about selling out his Czechoslovakian mistress to the Russians in order to save himself. As Martins puts it in Greene's text, "evil was like Peter Pan—it carried with it the horrifying and horrible gift of eternal youth," a perspective from which other people are not quite real; they're merely conveniences or obstacles. That's why Lime can make Martins an extraordinary offer on the Ferris wheel. At the ride's apex, they stand in a swinging cabin, the cityscape seesawing crazily in the background. Disgusted by his friend's evident shamelessness, Martins asks him, "Have you ever seen one of your victims?" As an answer, Harry beckons Holly to the cabin window and bids him to look on the people in the amusement park below, now mere specks:

> Victims? Don't be melodramatic. Would you really feel any pity if one of those dots stopped moving forever? If I offered you 20,000 pounds for every dot that stops, would you really, old man, tell me to keep my money? Or would you calculate how many dots you could afford to spare?

After all, he cheerily rationalizes, he's doing no more than governments do. "They talk about the people and the proletariat. I talk about the suckers and the mugs. It's the same thing. They have their five-year plans and so have I." One could hardly imagine a more chilling parody of Christ's temptation in the desert. Lime makes his argument with such cunning confidence in its irresistibility that he backhandedly indicts our entire century, if not all human history. How many of us have steadfastly rejected his satanic temptation? How often have our leaders chosen to sacrifice the dots on the ground in the cause of some higher political goal—the classless state, say, or national identity—when what they were really after was the cheapest of bribes, the so-called power and glory of this world? How many dots have we sacrificed in Serbia?

Reed stingingly delivers one of Greene's central messages: No one has clean hands, least of all those who hold official authority. It turns out that Harry's penicillin racket was made possible by the Allies' occupation forces. They decided to restrict the antibiotic to their military hospitals, keeping it from the Austrians. Reed widens the indictment with a sort of macabre grace note supplied by the running gag of Holly mistaking Calloway's name time and again: He keeps calling him Callaghan until the exasperated major finally points out, "I'm British, not Irish." Yes, so you are, one thinks. Other than that, you're as fine a chap as the rest of us good souls. It's just that we're all a bit compromised by those nagging entanglements we have with our respective tribalisms and self-interests.

Although leavened by theological hope, Greene's story is, in his narrator's words, "grim and sad and unrelieved." Reed, however, had the visual wit to turn it into popular entertainment. He brightened Greene's grayness without sacrificing any of his provocative darkness. What seems bleak on the page fairly blazes on the screen, nowhere more so than when Welles makes his justly famous entrance as Harry Lime, a name with a distinctively demonic aura. "Old Harry" is British slang for Satan, and Lime, as Harry's dialogue reminds us, suggests limelight and Lucifer's pre-fallen splendor. After hearing the other characters discuss this scoundrel obsessively for 59 minutes, we become—at least on first viewing—accustomed to thinking of him as an absence whose presence is felt everywhere, almost a Thomistic version of evil. Then Lime suddenly appears, and the screen flares with an energy that we could hardly have anticipated. Old Harry will only be on screen for 11 minutes, but what an 11 minutes!

Lurking in the shadows of a doorway, Lime is revealed to us when a window is opened above, illuminating him. As the camera trucks slowly forward, it reveals Welles for the first time. In extreme close-up, his face seems the radiant, incandescent source of all the world's light as he smiles at us with a conspirator's knowing welcome. You've been looking for me, his expression mockingly says. Well, how do like what you see? With an arch smile on his overfed but still handsomely rakish visage, Welles is physically the incarnation of debonair sleaze. The masterfully contrived scene defines Lime instantly. He is a charming, fallen angel of light emerging from his chosen darkness, as unbowed as he is unrepentant. We instantly understand why others are drawn to him. He may be morally contemptible, but he is also a vital, quicksilver Lucifer, who speaks seductively to the infantile wantonness in us all.

Typical of Greene's vision, Lime becomes both satan and savior to the innocent Martins, at once a source of temptation and an occasion to redeem himself. In Greene's excessively Augustinian universe, no one is saved without first taking the sacrament of sin. Martins does this by awakening to his complicity with the engaging Harry. It's dupes like himself who license such predators.

Thus Lime, who had been the elusive third man at his fake accident, becomes unintentionally quite a different third man, the one who shows up in Chapter 24 of Saint Luke's gospel. In this passage, two disconsolate disciples are walking to Emmaus after Christ's Crucifixion. As they proceed, they suddenly notice there is a third man walking with them. Only when they pause to break bread together are their eyes opened. The third man is Jesus.

This is the film's faith: that despite our ineradicable selfishness, we nevertheless serve as instruments of one another's salvation. Greene, perhaps, but not grim.

C

This article first appeared as a Vital Signs in the August 1999 issue.

H. Ward Sterett

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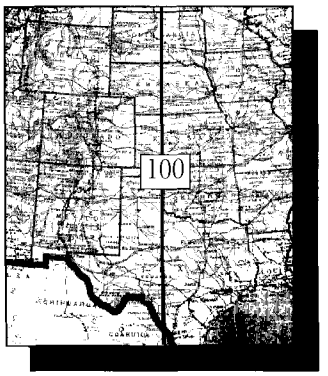
The Hundredth Meridian

by Chilton Williamson, Jr.

Dust Thou Art



Sheep Mountain like a fallen tombstone lay on the horizon under a sky thickening with gray cloud ribbons and white lenticulars. It was too cold for snow yet, and rain had not fallen for weeks in the mountains. The wind raised small storms of dust on the pale surface of the clay road and whirled the last yellow leaves from the brushy aspen stands. Past the washboard last spring's ruts, still fixed in the hard clay, shunted the front end of the truck left, right, then back to center again. The trailer followed, fishtailing in clouds of the fine dust. From the cattle guard at the top of the rise south of Commissary Ranches the twin red triangles of Baldy Mountain and Wyoming Peak 50 miles north appeared, waiting for snow.

At Fontenelle Creek I parked the rig on a bench south of the crossing above the beaver-dammed floodplain, saddled the mare, and strapped on the pack and the rifle in its leather scabbard. Red fire winked in the early dusk from camps sheltered by aspen groves across Pomeroy Basin as we followed the wooded switchbacks down to the crossing, where we turned up the right bank of Fontenelle to Bear Trap Creek. The cloud cover extended itself beyond the frontal ridge as it thickened and lowered above the mountains, and now the air felt gentle and soft, full of treachery. I kicked the mare up to a trot as we ascended along Bear Trap, then let her keep her own pace on the steeps. We reached camp with only enough light to raise the tent by, and gather wood. The night was warm as in summer, but starless. Following supper I worked gathering more of the dry wood and carrying it in under shelter of the limber pines and afterward sat late beside the fire drinking whiskey, while the mare grazed. Deep in the night I woke to the sound of a quiet rain on the rain fly, which changed as I listened from a liquid pelt to a frozen scrape. When I woke again a half hour before dawn a foot of new snow lay on the ground beyond the shelter of the trees. The mare nickered as I emerged from the tent, and I gave her a measure of sweet grain from the pack. The snow went on falling and the air was colder now, behind the warm front that had preceded the storm. I dropped a compass into the pocket of my orange coat, lifted the rifle from the pine snag where it hung by the leather sling, and walked off into the silence of the gray muffled woods and the snow coming straight down between the dark pine trees.

Three hundred yards out from camp I came on the tracks of a cow elk and calf, made within the last five minutes. I stepped over them and walked on through the woods under Indian Ridge. The snow had silenced the uproar of dead leaves on the dry forest floor, now a half-inch of purple mud beneath six inches of wet snow. Mud mixed with snow filled in between the lugs of my boot soles, but the going was all right as long as I was on the level. I walked on slowly through the lightening woods, cradling the rifle in my left arm and stopping every 20 or 30 feet to stare between the trees and across small openings, until I reached the steep gorge where Roaring Fork cuts down from the ridge behind. Then I turned and started back the way I had come, only keeping a little downhill. I was halfway to camp already when I saw the fresh track of a big bull ahead in the snow.

The bull had been moving uphill at a walk from the ravine. Taking care not to step in his prints I followed him for 150 yards to where he had intersected my own, coming from camp. Here he had stopped, stiffened, turned, and headed toward the ravine again at a trot, his ungulate hoofs biting into the wet clay and scattering particles like drops of blood across the white snow. It was dark in the ravine where the firs closed up into thick forest. I hesitated, and started downhill with the gun on my shoulder, lifting one mud-laden boot after the other over the slippery logs.

The bull kept ahead by several hundred yards, never allowing me to sight him, although I caught his strong bullish scent occasionally when the wind came just right. I followed him through the deep woods and into the darker gorge where, among the milling tracks of the herd, I lost him for a time before picking up the trail again, going back uphill. I shifted the heavy rifle to the opposite shoulder and began climbing out. The bootsoles were balled with snow and mud, and each time I set the up-slope foot and pressed down it slid back several inches in the wet clay. Before I reached the bench, although my wind held out, my legs were weak and aching. The tracks crossed the bench to the base of Indian Ridge and started up the cliff face, diagonally across the talus to the high rim above. By taking the mare I could cross by the horse trail a half-mile south, then ride north and pick up the track again on the forested western slope.

About the time I returned to camp the snow changed to a gray penetrating rain. I built up a fire from the supply of dry wood and considered, drinking fresh boiled coffee while raindrops hissed in the flames. Then I rose from beside the fire and got to work. In less than an hour the camp was struck and loaded and we were on our way down to Pomeroy Basin, the mare sliding behind me in the mud as I led from the knot at the end of the lead rope.

Rain fell all the time we were coming out of the mountains, and it was falling even harder in the basin. Mixing with the Indian Summer dust, the water had dropped the bottom out of the road, where the mare struggled heavily. I pulled the pack down, threw it in the truck bed, and unhooked the trailer from the pickup, while she stood miserably in the rain. Then I mounted again and rode back the way we had come to Fontenelle Creek, where we crossed by the ford and rode on across country to Kovaches' camp, where they were eating a late dinner inside the canvas army tent with a fire going in the woodstove. Someone gave me something hot to eat, and Jerry took the mare from me, saying that he had plenty of feed to keep her with his horses

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until the road set up, or dried out. I drew the saddle off and stowed the tack behind the tent, and Jerry's son Todd drove me back to the truck in his Jeep, across the ford.

The truck lost traction on the first grade going south, and I got out to chain up. Lying on my back in mud I chained all four tires, and got up in the cab again looking like a survivor from Burnside's Mud March. Mud slathered the Indian blanket upholstery and balled on the floor mat beneath the pedals. At the top of the hill I got out again to check the fastenings, when another truck coming north turned out alongside in the sagebrush. It was a party of Search and Rescue, looking for a woman who had been missing from her camp for nearly 24 hours. The rescuers were in high spirits, amused to recognize me in my chrysalis of mud. It had taken four hours to drive the 45 miles from Kemmerer, and mud was caked so thick in the wheel wells that the tires had barely room enough to turn.

I worked in town for two days before returning up country, taking one of the Land Cruisers with me this time. The road was set up pretty well except for the deepest holes, where the trailer would not have made it through. I fixed camp at an edge of forest above the creek, and that evening it rained again. Rain soaked the kindling that lay about in the woods and leaked through the peeled waterproofing on the old nylon tent. I ate cold antelope sandwiches with whiskey for supper, and spread a woolen blanket on the tent floor beneath the sleeping bag. By morning the rain had stopped, a muffled silence in the cold darkness. I left camp 90 minutes before first light, carrying the rifle on my shoulder and a flashlight in one hand, across Bear Trap and up the steepening trail through the dripping woods. The snow was mostly gone, washed away and evaporated except for a few pale patches off in the dark beyond the focused beam of the electric light. Already my woolen pants were caked with mud, and my feet felt encased in anvils. Nothing that was solid was left in this dark world, nothing real, nothing supportive, nothing to hold to, nor brace with, nor against. Movement was self-defeating, struggle impossible, as in a nightmare in which flight is running in place and breathing smotheration. Attempting to will myself out of the dream, I could not awake. So I kept climbing, out of the lifting darkness into the pale hopeless drear of the gathering light that suffused the soaked woods where the elk had withdrawn to the nearly impenetrable depths of the black timber, mythical creatures as mysterious and elusive as the hippogriff. Arrived finally at the steeps I pocketed the flashlight, took hold of the slender aspen trunks on either side of the trail, and pulled myself upward, hand over hand through the mud.

I hunted all day in intermittent rain under a lowering sky, through canyons and along the clouded scarps of ridges where water vapor crawled among the wind-stunted trees, stopping often to rest my legs and sometimes kindle a brief fire from the dead branches I smeared with petroleum vaseline, and toward evening began the sliding unbalanced descent to camp down the jellied mountainside. A horse trailer had jackknifed on the switchbacks above Fontenelle, and three men in yellow rain slickers were attempting to lead the resisting horses out through the narrow space at the end of the trailer where the door was jammed hard against the cutbank. In camp the tent sagged against the poles, and the fire pit enclosed a pool of ashes. Inside the tent was damp, but the wet had failed to penetrate the bedroll. I sat on it with my feet outside to remove the shapeless boots, and brought them reluctantly into the tent. A couple of antelope sandwiches were left in the daypack. I drank most of what remained of the whiskey while I ate them and found strength enough to remove the wool pants and sweater and get inside the mummy bag, which seemed like more than I could ever need or wish for throughout eternity.

When I returned to the mountains a week later the road was stiff as a frozen corpse, and the iron fir trees pointed against the snowfields. I left the Land Cruiser at the crossing and started along the trail, hardened in the contortions of its last agony. A powdery snow filled the hollows and scrapes, and I had to climb hard to stay warm through the fine blowing snow. The mare was safe at home, but I carried in my wallet an unfilled elk tag, valid for eight hours more of daylight. The last hunting camp had been pulled out of Pomeroy Basin several days before, and I was alone in the snowy mountains, with only my rifle and the staring unseen elk for company.

The knotted trail turned my ankles as I climbed, halting often to rest the pain of my lungs, seared by the Arctic cold, and eat some jerky. The snow deepened on the ground as the elevation increased and the falling snow flew thicker, driven by winds coming across Indian Ridge. Turning back to look down canyon I saw my tracks behind me, filling in with snow and drifting over. At the hogback swale east of the ridge the fresh powder reached my knees, breaking imperceptibly against the woolen leggings as I pushed on into the woods lying between the swale and the whitened cliff. I walked a long way through the woods where the snow in places barely penetrated the black canopy of the forest without finding elk, or sign of elk.

A brace of pine grouse exploded from the snow and flew into a tree at my approach. I built a fire under their roost and sat beside it on a log, watching the ragged flames evaporate the snowflakes, and the birds with their cocked heads and round eyes, staring down at me. It was white and still and perfect in the forest, miles above the binding red morass of the two-week season. After a while, when I felt warm again, I scuffed snow over the remains of the fire with the side of my boot, reached the rifle from a tree branch, and told the birds goodbye before starting out through the woods to the open park, where a snowy twilight was already coming.

As I traversed the brushy sidehill below the hogback the snow clouds tore apart and the disc of the sun burned through, wan and wobbly as if by some miracle it had become unfixed in the pale sky. Light broke suddenly against the hill, and a form appeared like a spirit upon the top of the ridge, directly below the sun. The bull raised his head as I brought the rifle up until the back points of the rack scraped the croup, and the shag of his throat was exposed. I found the heart in the crosshairs and moved up a foot above the backbone, but then I did not shoot. This was neither the time nor the place for blood, even less the driving wedge of gunshot into the absolute beauty and peace of the wilderness. Instead I lowered the gun and stripped the magazine of shells, and when I finished the light had vanished from the hill, and the bull with it. Pocketing the shells I shouldered the rifle once more, and stepped off downhill into the gathering dusk. c

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25 Years of Chronicles

AMERICAN EMPIRE

Developed nations should assist poorer states by doing no harm. Washington should end government-to-government assistance, which has so often buttressed regimes dedicated to little more than maintaining power and has eased the economic pressure for needed reforms. The United States should stop meddling in foreign affairs which matter little to America; the result is usually to stir up conflict, raise expectations, and leave nations worse than before. At the same time, the United States should improve the access of poorer states to the international marketplace—including its own. Most importantly, it should clearly state that foreign countries, not the West, ultimately control their own destinies.

—from Doug Bandow, "Down the Rathole: Where Foreign Aid Goes," June 2000

The Confederates had never sought to cause the Government of the United States to "perish from the earth." It was the Union that was seeking to cause the Confederacy and the governments of the 11 Southern states to "perish." Had the South wanted the government to "perish from the earth," the Confederate army could have marched into Lincoln's capital after the First Battle of Bull Run in June 1861, when the Union army had been sent up the road to Washington in wild retreat. The South did not want this; the South only wanted to be free.

—from Patrick J. Buchanan, "Mr. Lincoln's War: An Irrepressible Conflict?" October 1997

So we end up with all the key political words turned inside out, and once that happens, as Confucius wisely noted, no state is governable since the people cannot understand their rulers and the rulers cannot understand themselves, much less the people. Meanwhile, we must preserve the free world (actually unfree; we have elections but no politics) from—let's see, Kim Il Sung's son and his atomic armada; and then there is Haiti, where we must restore order and justice and freedom as we did when Franklin Roosevelt invaded the island (he was in the Navy Department at the time, and one of the bizarre lies that he liked to tell ever after was how he, personally, had written the excellent constitution of Haiti). Perhaps Gulf War II might be useful, to justify the military budget and the taxes that now go almost entirely for "Defense" (Social Security income and outgo are separate from the budget, a fact that is kept permanently secret from the taxpayers who are supposed to respond in a Pavlovian way to "wasteful people programs").

—from Gore Vidal, "Cleaning Our Stables," June 1995

Is it too far-fetched to imagine a time when intervention might be justified if a country fails to provide three branches of government, along the American model, with a Supreme Court administering a plastic Constitution aided by Harvard and Yale professors? Could we justify armed intervention any time women have second-class status, as is still true in many Islamic and African nations? . . .

Statecraft has always required prudence, particularly where there are no clear abstract principles for guidance. If sovereignty is to be preserved, there will be a great need for such prudence, and a great need to resist the temptation to abuse our military power in the pursuit of chimerical and dangerous ends. We must learn that we cannot seek to overturn *every* injustice, that there are at least two sides to every argument, and that the opportunities for disinformation and falsehood have multiplied exponentially in our "information age." Accordingly, we ought to proceed with extraordinary judgment, restraint, integrity, and an attention to our classic constitutional values, the most important of which are the protection of property and self-government. The risk of generating harmful precedents is horrific, and the costs of inconsistency are dreadful.

—from Stephen B. Presser, "The Living Constitution and the Death of Sovereignty," July 1999

So it was on that most chaotic night of all nights of those years, August 4, 1964, when Washington decided to go to war officially. Just before midnight, I had been the eyewitness (with the best seat in the house) to an action that had been reported as an attack by North Vietnamese PT boats against the American destroyers *Maddox* and *Joy*. It was in fact a false alarm brought about by the destroyers' phantom radar contacts and faulty sonar operation on a very dark, humid, and stormy night. This was realized during the event by the boss of the destroyers at the scene, and by me, the boss of the airplanes overhead. Corrective messages were sent instantly to Washington: "No PT boats."

A few hours later, I was awakened to organize, brief, and lead

Anthony Harrigan (l) shares a drink with Adm. James Bond Stockdale.

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the first air strike against North Vietnam, a reprisal for what I knew to be the false alarm. It was true that I had helped repulse an actual attack three days before and that I thought it likely that another real one would occur in the future. But what to do, knowing that hours before Washington had received the false-alarm messages and that it would be none other than I who would be launching a war under false pretenses.

I remember sitting on the side of my shipboard bed, all alone in those predawn minutes, fully conscious of the fact that history was taking a major turn, and that it was I, Jimmy Stockdale, who happened to be in the Ferris-wheel seat that was just coming over the top and starting its descent. . . . There was no question of getting the truth of that night out: that truth had been out for hours. I was sure that there was nothing I could do to stop the "reprisal" juggernaut pouring out of Washington. My course was clear: to play well the part I had been given. The Author had cast me in a lead role of a Greek tragedy. Who else to lead my pilots into the heavy flak of the city of Vihn and blow the North Vietnamese oil storage tanks off the map?

—from James Stockdale, "Epictetus in Uniform," March 1987

CHRISTENDOM

. . . [T]here is a fundamental point of intersection between the theory of a just government and much of the underpinning of what we know as Western civilization. Just as there is a necessary nonrational element in the former, so is there a powerful, ordering rational element in Christianity. The start of the Gospel of St. John reads, in English, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." The blending of Platonic elements with Christianity is evident, but the process becomes much more so in the Greek text from which the translation is made. In the Greek, "beginning" is not *genesis* which means a start in time, as used in the first book of the Old Testament, but *arkhe*, which means the beginning not so much at a particular point in time at which things start, but as the foundation principle out of which being comes. "Word," of course, comes from the Greek *logos,* which includes the notion of reason, the inner essence of meaning. Thus, we have the idea that in the beginning, as the foundation principle of the universe, was meaningful reason, and the Word—*logos*—was with God, the Word was God. That is to say, the universe as conceived by this Gospel is not arbitrary, not a matter of chance or accident, but a reasonable world following a reasoned order with God.

It is this interpretation of the meaning of reality, taken from and developed from the Greek philosophers, that runs through the great tradition of Christianity. It is expressed once more by the greatest of all poets at the height of the Middle Ages, by Dante, when he writes, in *The Divine Comedy*, "In the great seas of being, all things preserve a mutual order and this it is that maketh the Universe like unto God."

—from James Burnham, "To See the World and Man," April 1984

Perhaps the best lesson that Americans can learn from Yugoslavia is that there is no such thing as a multicultural nation. Certainly what has made the United States a great nation is its cultural heritage. The talents which immigrants brought to America from various cultures blossomed in the context of our culture.

We are a product of Western civilization and Christianity, both of which evolved in Europe. Our own derivation of this civilization emphasizes individual rights and responsibility, strong family bonds, limited representative government, religion separated from state, a strong sense of community, free enterprise, private property, the rule of law and reason, and a common language with which we communicate this cultural heritage. To be an American citizen (or, as an immigrant, to aspire to be one) is to join these cultural bonds, not import alternatives. The only real alternative is the eventual dissolution of America—which, if history is any guide, will likely occur under conditions of savage hostility.

—from David Hartman, "Reflections on a Texan's Visit to Bosnia," January 1999

Perhaps there is another, more subtle form of colonialism with which the United States has not been reproached. West European countries have equally contributed to this cultural and spiritual colonialism in the name of a certain Marxism and technology. I'm speaking about Far Eastern countries that, having become Marxist, have broken their attachments to thousand-year-old spiritual traditions. In this way, the new cultural colonialism is contrary to that of the past, in which the Asian countries' cultures were left intact. For example, Indochina under French colonization was allowed a spiritual liberty because the colonizers did not tamper with their culture. Nowadays, China, Korea, and other countries, having forgotten their traditions so as to adopt technology and an excessive politicization, are no longer free, in spite of their political independence. National independence is not always synonymous with liberty, either physical or moral. Poland, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, and Rumania are subjected to a single way of thought, to a cultural tyranny, which, far from being simply political, is above all an ideological tyranny.

—from Eugene Ionesco, "Realism and the Spirit," February 1986

All we need is to keep one important thing in mind: The United States, Europe, France, and a few other countries are by their very nature inseparable, as they are part of the same Western civilization. If it is still allowed to say so, without offending anyone, this Western civilization was made by the white race. It has even been called the white man's burden. This civilization was born out of the Greek and the Roman civilization, the Bible and the Gospels, Renaissance humanism, and most of the great scientific discoveries. The rights of man stem directly from Christianity, in which Western civilization is steeped. Our spiritual, moral, family, and aesthetic values have their sources in the ideas developed during the course of our long, shared history.

—from Jean Raspail, "Defending Civilization," April 1998

But—and I can hear the question despite my disavowals—what are you suggesting? Are you suggesting that one must be a believing Jew or Christian to write good novels? Certainly not—though one is tempted to make the case and indeed present the evidence that the Jewish novelist, secular or religious, has a certain advantage, what with his unique placement in a strictly lin-

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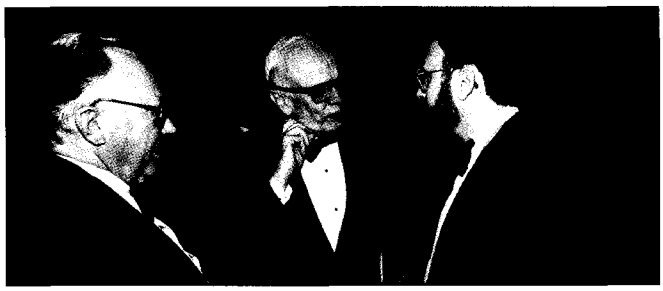

Walker Percy (c) makes a point to Russell Kirk (l) and Thomas Fleming.

ear time and history. By a "certain view of reality" I am speaking of the linearity of history, the density of things and events, the mystery and uniqueness of persons, a view that seems natural to us but is in fact the cultural heritage of Judeo-Christianity. Which is to say that I haven't read any good Buddhist novels lately. It is to say also that B.F. Skinner, who believed that all life is a matter of stimuli and responses, could not possibly write a good novel—though I believe in fact that he did try. It is to say that the novels of H.G. Wells could not possibly be otherwise than as bad as they are. And I have never read a Marxist novel without being overwhelmed by the thesis.

—from Walker Percy, "Physician as Novelist," May 1989

CLASSICAL PAIDEIA

It is said that one bright young theorist told his friends as he lay dying of AIDS, "I die happy, because I was infected by Michel Foucault." Those words could be, may yet be, the epitaph of the humanities in the United States. Unlike AIDS, there is a cure for postmodernism. It will not come from quoting a few paragraphs of Derrida, or Said, or Kristeva out of the context of their entire careers. It must come from returning to the rich and lively and essential traditions of editing and commenting on the texts that are the basis not only of literary studies, but of our civilization, from antiquity to the present.

—from E. Christian Kopff, "Postmodernism, Theory, and the End of the Humanities," January 1996

I know we cannot get back to the ideal of "classical" man with classical learning, classical books, and a closed and classical worldview in which everything is neatly and finally put in its place; "classical man" of this kind was living in quite another world than ours, if he ever was alive. We have consigned the *logos* to computers, which make it incredibly effective yet unintelligible (safe, specific details perceived by specialists of details), and to the media, where entertainment successfully masks the tyranny of money.

The study of humanity's evolution in history—and this finally is what classical scholars, for their part, try to do—may still encourage a fuller understanding of our world, in which humans are confronted with each other and with reality, confronted with the strangeness of people and the strangeness of being, to be—one can hope—overcome by insight. The hope of Greek philosophers that it is possible to speak with intelligence about what is real should still persist, and even a Hellenist will acknowledge that this must not necessarily be done in Greek . . .

—from Walter Burkert, "Classics—Past Ideology and Persistent Reality," April 1993

Tom McCluskey

Thomas Fleming (l) and John Howard (r) with Ingersoll Prize winners Muriel Spark and Walter Burkert.

DECLINE AND FALL

I cannot swear that we are completely on the other side of the age of reciprocal misunderstandings and ignorance, but I would venture that at this moment, in the late 20th century, our democracies are closer and more similar than ever before. On both sides of the Atlantic, we face the same big social questions, rendered more acute each day by the extension of the notion of "rights." The more wealth our societies produce, the more intense becomes the debate over how it should be distributed. In this realm, America has the same sort of problems as France and Western Europeans in general. The list runs from the urban crisis (which in Europe has taken the form of a suburban crisis) to the problem of how to pay for Social Security. Everywhere, political democracy has become social, and in this domain, America, in spite of her tradition of extreme individualism, has the same problems as the European welfare states.

—from François Furet, "The Long Apprenticeship: American Democracy and the Future of Europe," July 1996

What will Americans of 2030 think when they walk the streets of New York and Los Angeles as we walk the streets of the 19th-century towns? We cherish the remains of the older towns and cities and take pride in the lives that created those communities and formed the character of those times. It is hard to imagine any thoughtful, civilized American of 2030 looking at the 1980's and 1990's and having similar feelings of pride. In fact, New York and Los Angeles and other aggregations of mass humanity may not even exist then in a recognizable way. They may have imploded, with responsible law-abiding, self-reliant citizens fleeing their precincts, leaving behind masses of irresponsible, lawless, dependent proletarians inhabiting a near-wasteland. Already masses of young men who are unfit for anything but a life of crime fill the big cities, where car theft is a rite of passage and where indiscriminate, drive-by shootings have reduced streets to the condition of Beirut.

—from Anthony Harrigan, "The Plains States and America's Future," December 1993

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The literary nihilists, the artists of disorder, enjoin us to degenerate into the lower forms of life, which are brutish. One may discern in any day's newspaper some item that is evidence of a widespread "intellectual" hostility toward religious belief and toward true humanism. Leading book publishers puff up works of fiction meant to convince us that indeed we are but naked apes, and works of political polemics intended to repudiate our social order and bring on, at best, what Tocqueville calls "democratic despotism." Reviewers simper at the obscene and revile intemperately—or ignore altogether—books that attempt to work a renewal of mind and conscience. The oligarchs of the antagonist world, in the realm of letters, are eager to attract more dupes.

—from Russell Kirk, "The Literature of Order," February 1985

America's ability to compete in the world was also affected by its high rates of violent crime. By 1985 it had five times more homicides, ten times more rapes, and 17 times more robberies than Japan. New York City had twice as many homicides as in all of Japan. In the five years of the early 1980's, United States business had to hire 602,000 security officers just to keep people from ripping them off. This crime wave was costly both to the citizens' psyche and to the efficiency of the economy.

By 1986 Japan's taxpayers supported 50,000 inmates, including pretrial detention inmates, while the United States supported 580,000 adult prisoners. If you were to take all the prisoners in the United States in 1986 and put them in one place, it would have been a city larger than Detroit. That city had two suburbs—West Probation and East Parole—that contained another 3.7 million people. One out of 35 American males in 1986 was on probation or on parole. Such figures were hardly conducive to quality products.

—from Richard Lamm, "Decline of the West: A Western View on the Fall of American Civilization," February 1989

At the moment there are 540 municipal employees in the city work force for every 10,000 people in the city. That ratio doesn't mean very much until it is compared to the second highest such ratio among American cities. Detroit has 206 municipal workers for every 10,000 in the population. New York is by any measure the last and most entrenched bastion of socialism in the world. There are more school administrators (5,400) at 110 Livingston Street, the nerve center of the city's school system, than there are from Portugal to the Ural Mountains.

—from Herbert I. London, "Letter From New York City: Life as Pathology," July 1993

I grew up in a Los Angeles that had very little crime. We locked the door to our house with a skeleton key, when we remembered. I often think of the contrast with today when listening to rebroadcasts of the *Dragnet* radio series that originally aired in the early 1950's. It was one of my favorites then and still beats TV now. Jack Webb stuck close to real cases and was a stickler for detail. As Sergeant Joe Friday, he went after murderers and robbers, to be sure, but much of the time he was tracking such public enemies as shoplifters, bicycle thieves, check forgers, drag racers, teenage rowdies, and the like. Call the LAPD today and report that your bicycle has been stolen! Cars are stolen so often (nearly 200 a day) that the LAPD does nothing more than list the vehicle on a "hot sheet" and wish the victim good luck. Korean merchants complain that customers brazenly walk out of their stores without paying for merchandise because they know that the police will not respond to a call for help. The police are simply overwhelmed by the volume of crime and are kept more than fully occupied by murder, armed robbery, and rape.

—from Roger D. McGrath, "Treat Them to a Good Dose of Lead," January 1994

Back row (from left): E. Christian Kopff, Clyde Wilson, William Mills, Thomas Fleming, Harold O.J. Brown, Andrei Navrozov, Paul Gottfried. Front row: John Shelton Reed, Bryce Christensen, Joseph Schwartz, Katherine Dalton, Russell Kirk.

The buffalo has become a symbol for th[e] recognition of a modern devastation. We are told by Peter Matthiessen that there were an estimated 60 million buffalo on the Great Plains well into the 19th century, "probably the greatest animal congregations that ever existed on earth." The animal is extinct in the wilds now. That is a fairly impressive record no matter how you look at it: destroying the greatest animal congregation that ever existed on earth. This we managed, we must remind ourselves, with merely horses and rifles. Now we have . . . well, probably no need to go into all that.

A large number of people lately feel that the genie has got out of the bottle and he is us. It's as if you have the buffalo bull by the tail, and as he races across the prairie, someone is yelling, "Turn him, turn him." Such a sense of helplessness has generated an urgency on the part of many for a myth that can engender responsibility for the present and the future. . . . It is clear that thoughtless narcissism (protecting animals that look more like us), or a detached urban puritanism (one lady was mad about a polluted swamp out our way, and the "pollution" turned out to be duckweed), is not going to serve. Our great grasslands, like our swamps and arctic "wastes," had until recently been ignored while we went about paving the rest of the country. They were thought to be forbidding, not in the top-ten places to go; but now that is changing. . . .

Many people are under the impression that once Superfund money is spent on a cleanup, that's the end of it. Wrong. The U.S. government turns around and sues all of the individual property owners to get the money back, even though they may have acquired the land after the damage was done by someone else. Which brings us back to Burke's flies of a summer. "Unmindful of . . . what is due to their posterity, [the temporary possessors and life-renters] [w]ould act as if they were the entire masters." Some of the pioneers could be right messy. They were on the way elsewhere, toward something over the horizon. Perhaps more land, more water, more gold, even something intangible, boundless. After all, shouldn't a man's reach exceed his grasp? On the way, however, the scene sometimes resembles the aftermath of recent barbarians whizzing down the interstate, dumping McDonald's portable, disposable dinner ser-

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vices for ten. Nowadays nature is something to push against, to move around, get out of the way, get on top of.

—*from William Mills, "The Flies of Summer," February 1989*

Because of the lurid attractiveness of what the Psalmist called the "sins of our youth," being a teenager has been elevated to the American ideal. "Those were the best days of my life," pined rock 'n' roller Bryan Adams. Fortysomethings (in what traditionally would have been considered the "best days of one's life") have mid-life crises and long to be teenagers again.

Rather than stand up and fight, churches since the 1950's have hired "youth pastors" to provide sexy activities and Clearasil Bible studies to teens. In the 70's, youth pastors began to hawk "Christian" rock—a marketable, sanitized, money-and-sex machine. Private Christian high schools (modeled after government schools) adopted all of the trappings of their secular counterparts—a displaced, coed group, spending eight hours a day together, plus road trips for the teams and cheerleaders, proms, and homecomings. Yet church leaders are puzzled by statistics that indicate that their young people now have higher rates of premarital sex and pregnancy.

—*from Aaron D. Wolf, "Teen Angel," August 2000*

DEMOCRATISM

The move toward mass, direct democracy in the large nation-state derives much of its appeal from an image of direct democracy reminiscent of the Athenian Assembly, or of the New England town meeting. But such an appeal is mistaken. The social conditions for face-to-face interaction and deliberation present on a small scale are not present in the larger nation-state. In primaries, referendums, opinion polls, and "tele-democracy" (such as the "electronic town halls" with viewer call-ins advocated by Ross Perot), we get the isolated, atomized citizen, pulling a lever, casting a ballot, or dialing an 800 number based on very little reflection or interaction. His or her vote is just one of millions that will have little effect on the outcome. The citizen has little incentive for informed debate or for investment in political knowledge.

—*from James S. Fishkin, "Reforming the Invisible Primary," November 1992*

The objection that "social" justice is not a kind of justice is often countered either by urging that the world would be a better place if the distribution of income and wealth were different from what it actually is or by protesting that this objection is at best trivially verbal. It is easy to argue with the first of these contentions. In my personal ideal world, for instance, successful pop stars would not be voted to become millionaires by the purchases made by everyone's teenage children. But this is simply irrelevant. For it is one thing to *justify* some sort of proceeding—that is, to show it to be desirable or excusable or in some other way preferable to the available alternatives—but it is quite another thing to *justicize* it, to show it to be not merely "socially" just but plain, old-fashioned just.

—*from Antony Flew, "'Social' Justice Is Not Justice: The Mirage of John Rawls," July 1999*

The return to democracy, a political form of antiquity which had failed completely and earned the ridicule and censure of the three philosophers who are the pillars of our civilization—Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle—is one of the most amazing features of the last 200 years. My American readers should realize that democracy came to their country as a gradual alien influence. It is mentioned neither in the Declaration nor in the Constitution . . . Democracy . . . belongs to the left . . .

—*from Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddihn, "Conservative or Rightist? A Personal Confession," January 1999*

Rationalism is philosophy in its adolescence. The adolescent seeks self-determination and certainty above all else. And what rationalism yields is *certainty* (we hold these truths to be self-evident); but certainty attaches only to abstractions, which are mere aspects of experience and not the whole. Nothing intellectually deep is self-evident. A political philosophy founded on truths self-evident to every adolescent is a politics fit only for adolescents.

—*from Donald Livingston, "David Hume and American Liberty," November 1995*

The appeal of the idea of national community is undiminished in our time. The symbols and impedimenta are everywhere to be seen. Community threatens to become the battleground of politics, replacing the enemy in this respect. Community is more siren-like, more seductive than economic growth and the size of budget deficits. . . .

The idea of national community is supported by an assumed inevitability of a certain theoretical scheme of progress . . . It is interesting that the same sketch of inevitable progress carries a theory of the true center of democratic government. In the beginning, the center was the colonial legislature. Stage two was the passing of the center to a national Congress, under the Constitution. But, it is argued, under the iron discipline of the march of history, democracy, true democracy, passed from Congress as center to the presidency. The president is, the script reads, the authentic center of national democracy, for he alone represents the entire people. This theory of progress was doing quite well until yet another state was introduced a few years ago, one that appears to be flourishing in certain legal circles. Not Congress, not the president, but the federal judge is the true Atlas of modern democracy. Think how long, the apologetics suggest, desegregation, apportionment, abortion legalization, and abolition of school prayers would have taken if these manifestly legislative acts had had to go through Congress and the presidency. For the federal judiciary they were the work of moments, by comparison. The federal judge, it is said, is untrammeled by the necessity of being elected, by the sweat and stench of politics, by any political obligation whatever. Properly instructed by critical legal studies, he is the reincarnation of Solon and Solomon. To bring the dreamed-of national community into existence through Congress and the presidency would take years, possibly decades. A few Supreme Court decisions, and the basic work would be done.

—*from Robert Nisbet, "The Present Age and the State of Community," June 1988*

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Any effort by the black community to combat spiritual and social decay must depend upon its ability to impose considerable social discipline and to rein in antisocial elements. . . . [T]he struggle to restore a stable family life may well prove *sine qua non*, and, if so, the necessary measures may not comport well with the endless demands for individual rights and the arrogant pretensions to such newly invented constitutional protections as envisaged, for example, in the program of the gay and lesbian movement. Whites have no business telling black communities how to resolve these problems and would do well to keep their own preferences and prejudices to themselves. But to speak of "community" at all means to recognize as unavoidable the existence of prejudices, whether grounded in religion and historically developed sensibility or in response to an immediate threat to survival.

—from Eugene D. Genovese, "The Southern Tradition and the Black Experience," August 1994

The rate of violent crime can be lowered—reducing the slaughter that kills blacks and the terror that grips whites—only if it is acknowledged that blacks are responsible for most violent crime. The problem—which is not merely the problem of crime but the problem of the black community's survival and success—can be solved. But it cannot be solved without facing the fact that a small number of irredeemably violent people are destroying the possibility of solution. The black majority alone cannot solve the problems of the black community, and a reduction of black violence is only a necessary but not a sufficient condition for the solution of its problems; the commitment and resources of the entire society are required. However, the problems cannot be solved at all unless the black majority can socialize the rest of the members of its community to meet the norms that must be met in any community that is to survive, and there is no chance whatever that members of the black majority will be able to do this while being picked off one by one on streets that a relatively small number of predators now control.

—from Steven Goldberg, "Black Murder," January 1995

. . . [T]he U.S. Holocaust Museum has moved the Poles, save for "some Polish intellectuals," from the first category [victims] to the second [victimizers], while homosexuals have been raised in its literature and displays to covictims with the Jews. One can be sure that the Brownshirts and Hermann Goering would appreciate this posthumous tribute. Some Nazi bigwigs, one may assume, might even be eligible for other victimological honors, in view of their drug-dependency and penchant for little boys. Note that the group having the most nefarious record of Nazi collaboration, the Bosnian Muslims, now gets much better press than the once-victimized Poles. The professional holocaust survivor and Hillary Clinton companion Elie Wiesel claims not to use the term lightly (and certainly not for the Nazi slaughter of Poles), but he has wailed about a new holocaust descending on the Bosnians. Such a catastrophe should be distinguished from the earlier unmentioned one that occurred in the Balkans, after the Bosnian Muslims had volunteered to form two Waffen S.S. divisions. This selective amnesia is so striking that even I, an Austrophile critic of the Serbs, note it with astonishment. Are human memories as selective as the reconstructed World War II victimology seems to suggest? This question is, of course, rhetorical.

—from Paul Gottfried, "Polonophobia," January 1997

Among the terms of endearment applied to Americans who worry about present immigration policy is "xenophobe." . . .

A "xenophobe" is someone who fears foreigners. Fears them why? No dictionary is competent to say. Every xenophobe doubtless has his own reasons. . . . Xenophobia, whatever connotations the word may take on in the mouths of the liberal establishment, speaks to a reality of human existence: to wit, there are foreigners we'd damn sure better fear. Or at the very least keep an eye on. . . .

Had the Mexicans, and the Spanish before them, possessed the sense to shut out my buckskin-clad forbears, scratching themselves and smelling no doubt of bear grease, nudging their wagons through the piney forests of the Sabine region, or debarking on the sandy beaches of the Gulf Coast, Texas might be a different place today. . . .

What Spain and Mexico lacked was a critical mass of xenophobes, ready, out of cultural pride, to point out the Gringo Peril, to close their minds fast to entreaties concerning brotherhood and diversity, to utter a curt but meaningful: No—*nunca, señores, nunca*. They didn't, and that's that. Still, the sibilant *sí* of 200 years ago, which ushered in the Gringo era, has residual resonance. And maybe more than that.

—from William Murchison, "From Greeks to Gringos: Why Mexico Lost Texas," July 1997

. . . [A]bout half of the Jews who live in the United States . . . define themselves in singularly ethnic terms. For them, "being Jewish" is a matter of who they are and what they are—it is something of which they are proud—but it carries no requirement to participate in public life as part of a community. Here Spinoza's model governs: the radically isolated individual of Jewish origin and Jewish predilections and proclivities, however these may be defined, even down to a style of joke-telling. Secular Jewishness defines traits deemed ethnically characteristic, even innate. Feelings and personal preferences take over, as secular Jews elevate the importance of having the "correct" feelings. In place of faith, history, and covenantal loyalty, they invoke personal opinion, memory, and ephemera of attitudes and political sympathies, certain that the right opinion, the correct collective memory, and the accepted attitude will suffice to make this person Jewish, that one not.

More to the point, secular Jews outside the framework of community suppose themselves smart, witty, and focused. In the hands of enemies, Jewishness finds its definition in such counterpart traits as clever, nihilistic and cynical, and aggressive. Both sides appeal to what we may dismiss as either racism or cultural determinism, depending on whether we opt for the explanation of traits by reason of nature or nurture. It hardly matters. When it comes to the privatization of secular Jewishness, we enter a world without rationality, racist or cultural. Like Hermann Goering, who said he would decide who was a Jew, secular Jews decide what "being Jewish" means to the ultimate "me." Once the individual decides to be Jewish on his own, then idiosyncratic interpretation takes over, and all larger public meanings fail.

—from Jacob Neusner, "Jews Without Judaism," November 1997

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HOPE

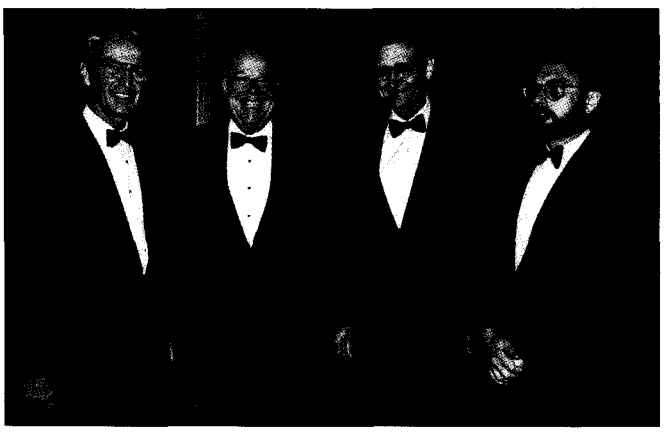
As the century ends, the marginality of poetry grows. Today it is either a ceremony in the catacombs, a ritual in the urban desert, a fiesta in the basement, or a revelation in the supermarket. It's true that poets are still persecuted in totalitarian countries and in old-fashioned military tyrannies; in democratic nations they are allowed to live and are even protected—except that they are locked within four walls not of stone but of silence. In the affluent societies of the West, dedicated to business and entertainment—or to passing the time, as the indicative phrase says—there is no time for poetry. Nevertheless, the poetic tradition has not been broken, nor will it be. If it were interrupted, the words would wither on our lips and our discourses would once again be the howling of monkeys. The continuity of poetry is the continuity of the human word, the continuity of civilization. Which is why the other name for poetry, in times like ours, is *perseverance*. And perseverance is the promise of resurrection.

—from Octavio Paz, "Ceremonies in the Catacombs," April 1988

HUMAN FREEDOM

Modern biology appears to have banished nihilism. But in so doing it has not led to a narrow form of genetic determinism. . . . I have never met a genetic determinist by this definition. Most or all biologists who study behavior, especially social behavior, are interactionists—they view final thought and response as the product of a complex interplay of genes and environment. Social behavior in human beings is the result of biologically based predispositions filtered and hammered into final shape by the particular cultures in which individuals are reared. On the other hand, I have met many cultural determinists, especially among the reigning social theorists. They deny or at least wholly ignore the influence of biology. The evidence—fortunately or unfortunately, depending on how you view it—has proved them wrong. I would say fortunately, because any species wholly dominated by culture and free of genetic constraint would run a grave risk of moral nihilism.

—from Edward O. Wilson, "On Genetic Determinism and Morality," August 1986



From left: John Howard, T.S. Eliot Award winner George Garrett, Richard M. Weaver Award winner E.O.Wilson, and Thomas Fleming.

LACKEYS OF THE REGIME

If there ever was a time when real debate on fundamental ideological questions was fostered and stimulated by the mass media in our country, it ended with the advent of the Cold War. The exigencies of the nuclear age, the perils of America's confrontation with Soviet communism, made it imperative, we were told, that "politics stop at the water's edge." This put foreign and military policy—literally matters of life and death—beyond the pale. Critical media scrutiny was *verboten*, and public debate, when it existed at all, was inevitably uninformed and invariably unwelcome. And the media, which often engage in lofty flights of rhetoric about their devotion to the First Amendment, eagerly embraced this drastic limitation not only on their freedom but on their essential function. They became devoted and obedient servants of the official line—as obedient as their counterparts in the communist camp, who at least made no pretense of independence.

—from Erwin Knoll, "Mass Media, Mass Conformity," October 1994

. . . [T]he audiovisual culture is more easily controlled, manipulated, and degraded by power than the written word. Because of the solitude in which it is born, the speed at which it can be reproduced and circulated, the secrecy with which it conveys its message, and the lasting mark on people's conscience of literary images, the written word has revealed a stubborn resistance to enslavement. In all totalitarian and authoritarian societies, if there is dissidence, it is through the written word that it manifests and keeps itself alive. In a good number of places, writing is the last bastion of freedom. With its demise, the submission of minds to political power could be total. In the kingdom of audiovisual, the master of technology and budget is the king of cultural production. And in a closed society, this always means, directly or indirectly, the state. It would decide what men should and should not learn, say, hear, and (in the end) dream. There would be no underground culture, no counterculture, no *samizdat*. This society, once personal choice and initiative in cultural activities are removed, would easily slip into mental slavery. . . .

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The nature of culture—either alphabetic or audiovisual, free or enslaved—does not stem from historical determination, from the blind and impersonal evolution of science. The decisive factor will always be man's choice, the decision of powers that can drive society in one direction or another. If books and gadgets are caught in a deadly fight and the latter defeat the former, the responsibility will lie with those who chose to allow it to happen. But I do not think this Orwellian nightmare will really occur, for our fate, as writers and readers, is linked to that illness or vice called freedom, which humanity caught rather late in history and which affects a good part of mankind in apparently an incurable way.

—from Mario Vargas Llosa, "Literature and Freedom," April 1992

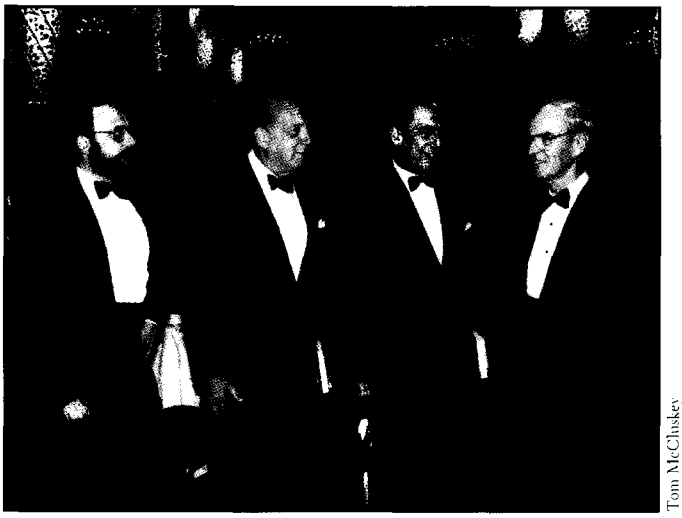
It is time to pose the question of why the American media and intellectuals display so much tender solicitation toward Russia and the Russians, while treating 300 million non-Russians of the former Soviet Empire as unpersons. One answer is that the media and intellectuals, of the left and of the right, are attracted to displays of brutal power. Our value system has evolved in such a way as to put on a pedestal those who are leaders in that regard. Such people and such nations have acquired immunity to criticism and that magic quality which encourages worship. This is why the twin powers of Russian art and Russian army are irresistible as objects of fawning attention, why the holes in Russian children's clothes generate more concern than birth defects and starvation in a Central Asian countryside poisoned by chemicals. Power attracts; its trespasses are blurred by its might. Stalin's famed question, "How many divisions does the Pope have?" underlies many a learned article and book written by think-tank gurus. American culture has been increasingly hospitable to the language of violence and power. Russians have mastered that language to perfection, and American elites seem to be mesmerized by it.

—from Ewa Thompson, "Russophilia," October 1994

How can we reclaim our values? Certainly not through legislatures, administrations, communal assemblies—in short: politics. That brings the fight into the rings and stadiums of the evening news, fashionable poses, social moods and sympathies, and TV sitcoms. Cultural influences and powers can be contested only by opposing cultural forces. It's not easy. Our time sees no honor in fairness. When amorality, vulgarity, and egocentrism of liberal lifestyles begin to emanate an odor of rot, palpably endangering the very health of the society, those who did everything to infect the social body with decay refuse to bear their responsibility. This is where the oldest conflict becomes opaque: The side that controls the media, as the liberals do, has nothing to fear. The media, the cradle of programmatic amorality, operate on a principle of fake innocence that can never be proven to be a fraud. They refuse to be held accountable for their deeds and for the putridity they inject into the nation.

—from Leopold Tyrmand, "Editor's Comment," May/June 1979

It has already become clear that, in spite of all liberal media efforts, there's an unbridgeable rift between the common people and the ugly beautiful people of America. In fact, the latter are the former's openly declared enemy. Two kinds of money earned by two kinds of people have obvious civilizational consequences: Those who provide food, electricity and transportation are pitched against the producers of news, entertainment,



Tom McCluskey

Thomas Fleming (l) and John Howard (r) with Richard M. Weaver Award winner John Lukacs and T.S. Eliot Award winner Mario Vargas Llosa.

pop art and distorted liberal ideas. The ugly beautiful people are the focus of contention: The first loathe them, the second not only tolerate them but permit them to act as their legitimate elite. . . .

In the end, it's all a strange, if not tragic, contradiction of democratic capitalism. Why, at its most advanced stage, does it still remunerate with money, work, thrift, enterprise, innovation, reliability, and courage in economic life, while, at the same time, lavishly granting fame and millionaire wealth to vulgarity, destruction, sham, wickedness, lies, expediency, obsequiousness to fads, stupidity, meanness, bestiality in culture? In short—why does it reward the ugly beautiful people with exorbitant success? It was not always thus; as it stands now, capitalism is, in the long run, the loser, in spite of some instant bonanzas for the record companies and TV corporations. With the help of a perverted First Amendment, which was not conceived as a privilege, but as a principle of mutual obligation, an insidiously mighty group exploits a bogus populistic rhetoric in order to accrue immense wealth and use it to corrupt the American culture. The only real title to populism is the sharing of people's historic condition and needs. Nothing is further from that than the multibillion-dollar entertainment industries run by the ugly beautiful people who fraudulently claim solidarity with the American people. Since the liberal culture that backs them is by now a dogmatic orthodoxy, anyone who opposes them must be branded as reactionary, redneck, low-brow, yahoo, etc. Which, in turn, makes a merciless struggle inevitable.

—from Leopold Tyrmand, "Editor's Comment," July/August 1979

The quality or relevance of literary work nowadays can be less important than the views expressed in it or the people you know. And just as bad or worse (it's difficult to judge with the dark growing darker) is the academy's refusal to carry on discourse with ideologies or views alien to its entrenched Marxist-humanism (no oxymoron that), and the reluctance of the literary-publishing complex to take note of, much less put into print or support, the work of anyone whose views are not quite correct.

—from Larry Woiwode, "Politics in American Letters: Remembering Dos Passos," August 1992

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LIBERAL ARTS

Fraud and deception among society's heroes draw attention to contradictions and inconsistencies in its value systems. Because American culture applauds entrepreneurship, independence, and ambition, for example, scientists have been encouraged to develop independent imaginations and innovative research, to engage in intense competition, to strive for success. Ironically, Americans also want their whitecoated heroes to be humble and generous in success, to share credit where credit is due, not to steal credit falsely. The discovery that a scientist has calmly and rationally cheated, lied, and deceived his colleagues and the public contradicts the common image of how scientists should act. It also creates doubt about the reliability of scientific advice—a disturbing uncertainty in a world where that advice is so pervasive.

—Marcel C. LaFollette, "The Politics of Scientific Fraud," September 1993

NATIONALISM

One of the things that has blurred the bitter, present-day realities of French society and politics has been the stupid habit of calling Jean-Marie Le Pen's National Front a "right-wing" party. In strict fact, the National Front, which is now in numerical terms France's leading workers' party, is no more a "right-wing" party than was Adolf Hitler's NSDAP—the *National-Sozialistische-Deutsche-Arbeiter-Partei*—which to the very end of the Third Reich proudly advertised itself as both a "socialist" and a "workers' party" in order to emphasize its popularity with the laboring masses of Germany. The reason why French working men and women have been abandoning the traditional parties of the so-called "left" and flocking to the National Front in droves is because they are fed up with the shopworn rhetoric of "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity," which has no relevance today to the conditions of everyday life in their once-tranquil suburbs.

—from Curtis Cate, "The Revolt of the French Masses: The Smoldering Fires of Immigration," July 1997

Patriotism grows from a sense of belonging to a particular country; it is confident rather than self-conscious; it is essentially defensive. Nationalism is self-conscious rather than confident; it is aggressive, and suspicious of all other people within the same nation who do not seem to agree with some of the popular nationalist ideology. Patriotism is traditionalist; nationalism is ideological. Patriotism is rooted to the land; nationalism to the mythical image of a people, of a community that so often is not a real community. Patriotism is not a substitute for religion, whereas nationalism often is. It may fill the emotional needs of insufficiently rooted people. It may be combined with hatred—and, as Chesterton said, it is not love (which is always personal and particular) but hatred that may unite otherwise very disparate men and women. Or, as Duff Cooper once put it, "the jingo nationalist is always the first to denounce his fellow countrymen as traitors."

—from John Lukacs, "The Patriotic Impulse," July 1992

By the end of World War II, the federal government had largely succeeded in replacing the various European-American identities with a "universal" American nationalism, and new immigrants were forced to abandon their national identity and native language and sign on to the "American way of life." Postwar American nationalism—built on democracy, capitalism, the Pledge of Allegiance, hot dogs, baseball, and Rotary—may have been sufficient to drive the Cold War, but it was insufficient to bind the nation or to act as a bulwark against alien cultures. People long for roots, for a sense of belonging. An abstract conception of democracy and capitalism can only displace, not replace, the songs and stories, faith and food, language and kinship that compose a true national culture. By alienating European Americans from their national cultures in the interwar period, the federal government replaced an emerging American national identity with a false nationalism, and undermined our ability to withstand assault from Third World cultures. When Lyndon Johnson signed the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, removing the national preference for European immigrants and opening the floodgates to Third World immigration, he signed the death warrant of postwar nationalism. . . .

What can be done? To say that America stands at a crossroads, with one fork leading to Europe and one to a global Third World culture, would be incorrect. America reached that crossroads in the early years of this century, and . . . our rulers chose the fork leading to the Third World. If we desire to revitalize our educational system and to reaffirm America's status as a European country, we must, like the Prodigal Son, acknowledge our error (and our bankruptcy) and return home. The standard neoconservative "solutions" advanced by Allan Bloom and Bill Bennett—"Great Books," a national core curriculum, an emphasis on assimilating immigrants—won't work; these were, in fact, among the tools used to subvert the older educational system and to place us on our current path. . . .

Multiculturalism is a fable, as is any American nationalism that tries to deny or eradicate the European and regional cultures that once made America strong. If America is to have a future as a nation, and not simply as a geographical region, then we must allow Anglo-American culture to bind Northern and Southern, Western and Central and Eastern European communities in the United States in a revitalized American civilization. It is time for the Prodigal Son to grow up, and to return home.

—from Scott P. Richert, "The Multicultural Lie: The European Roots of American Life," April 1998

[Donald Warren]: You identify yourself with the intellectual roots of German conservative thought that is quite different from National Socialism . . .

[Jörg Haider]: I think it is very important to have a clear understanding of German and European history on the main question of National Socialism. It contained many different streams of thought. There were socialist streams, and many people were executed for following this commitment. If the New

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Right had existed at the time of the Third Reich, these intellectuals would have been put in concentration camps, just as were German conservatives. There is a very important difference between a conservative revolution and National Socialism.

—from Donald Warren, "Letter From Austria, Pt. II: A New European Identity," October 1992

THE NEW WORLD ORDER

. . . [T]he central issue in American politics at the end of the century is what might be described as "The National Question"—whether America is that interlacing of ethnicity and culture we call a nation and whether the American nation-state, the political expression of that nation, is going to survive. It's a problem that's difficult even to discuss because of a peculiar semantic accident. American editors are convinced that readers will confuse the word "state," used in the rest of the English-speaking world to mean a sovereign political entity, as in the French *état* or the German *staat*, with the component parts of the United States, like California or Illinois. So they make writers here use "nation" instead. And this has undermined people's defenses against a heresy that has recently raised its head: that America is in essence a purely political construct, with no specific ethnic or cultural content at all.

—from Peter Brimelow, "The National Question," June 1993

. . . [P]eople are adamant about globalism. They say the world is getting smaller, nobody stays in one place anymore or even one country, the times are changing and we have to change with them. Certainly the way technology and telecommunications have affected our personal and working lives is astonishing. But people who say these things want us to believe that we have little or no power to shape our lives, that we must bow to fate in the form of international trade agreements and transatlantic telecommunications. And really, that is globaloney. . . .

We do not live in the "world." Mostly we live, eat, sleep, shop, go to school, go to church, hang out at the mall, all within a radius of a few square miles. There is no such thing as a global village; that is a phrase with no meaning. A village is a few hundred people living together, not a few billion. In a village you can know everybody. We could not take in all the names and faces and personalities and problems in the world even if we wanted to.

—from Katherine Dalton, "Homegrown," September 1997

If it's wrong to wipe a house or a neighborhood from the map, imagine all the homes and neighborhoods that would be lost if an entire nation were erased. In 1973, the Kinks were invited to play a special "Fanfare for Europe" concert honoring the United Kingdom's entry into the Common Market. And since Ray [Davies], as he put it in *The Storyteller*, "could give a toss for the Common Market," the band performed a selection of songs from their 1968 album *The Village Green Preservation Society* and their then-forthcoming rock opera *Preservation*. . . .

By the 1980's, the band was increasingly concerned that, in Dave Davies' words, "there's no England now." With 1989 came the anti-Thatcher, anti-E.C. *U.K. Jive*, an angry album bearing a burning Union Jack on its cover. . . . (". . . Down All the Days to 1992" was adopted by some irony-challenged E.C. bureaucrats as the European Commission's unofficial theme song.) In 1992 itself, the Kinks performed at Fete d'Humanité, a communist-sponsored anti-European festival in Paris. By this time, Ray was also writing *X-Ray*, half memoir and half science fiction, a book that posits a totalitarian world in which all nations have merged into a single corporation, in which "a country called England" is only a fading memory. . . .

A man like Davies, able to discern beauty even in a dirty, crowded train station, need never search long for small signs of vitality. "They're trying to build a computerized community," he sang in "Muswell Hillbilly." "But they'll never make a zombie out of me." So far, he's right.

—from Jesse Walker, "The Muswell Hillbilly," March 1997

OF THE LOBBY, BY THE LOBBY, AND FOR THE LOBBY

Many who leave Main Street, U.S.A., to do good in Washington, D.C., remain on to do well for themselves. Since the beginnings of the American Republic, thousands of former congressmen, staff assistants, and senior officials in the executive branch have trod that familiar career path. The bright and ambitious, as well as the foolish and indolent, discover gold along the banks of the Potomac River and succumb to "Potomac fever." In the process, these incipient power-brokers and mercenaries shed local attachments and forget the common people who first selected them to serve. Over the last 20 years, however, this pattern has changed in one significant respect. Previously, officials departed government to extract gold from domestic employers—banks, oil companies, railroads, manufacturers, and even some labor unions. Now, former bigwigs pimp and pluck for alien interests.

—from Alfred E. Eckes, "Selling Out—Past and Present," May 1993

What is most tiresome about the lobbying culture of Washington are the self-serving contortions its practitioners go through in describing their daily activities. Most lobbyists, of course, maintain that they do not really lobby—saying the "l" word publicly is a subtle indiscretion. Euphemisms such as "advise" or "consult" or "suggest," etc., are uttered instead. When making boastful proposals to prospective clients, lobbyists promise everything but the keys to the Oval Office. When criticism (an occupational hazard but a relatively infrequent inconvenience) occasionally arises in the press over the heavy-handed, strong-arm tactics used by lobbyists, the "Who, me?" modesty act is strutted out—"All we do is provide information." Most facilitators seem by nature to be perpetually auditioning to star in The Invisible Man and to prefer that their handiwork go unnoticed and undetected.

—from Charles Lewis, "Fixers for a Fee," May 1993

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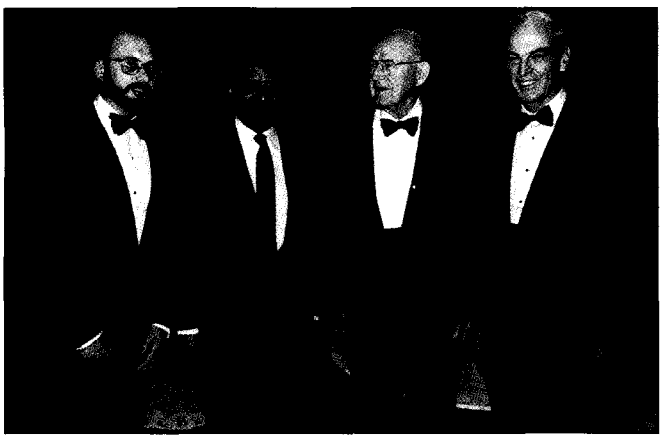
THE OLD REPUBLIC

Artur Schnabel . . . once said of Beethoven's sonatas that "this music is greater than it can ever be played." . . . The stories of American history are better than they can ever be told.

—from David Hackett Fischer, "Telling Stories in the New Age," March 1997

In my childhood, most human creatures, as they set forth to work or play, dance or love, touched hallowed ground, a pond, an everlasting spring, an old elm, a farm that generations had known and lived on and by. Children know these special sympathies for places, where they can hide and pretend. There can be no greater delight in privacy than the tunnel made in bales of hay, leading to a fragrant, hollowed-out, and usually itching place in a barn loft, which most little girls instinctively suspected. This pretending is child's best play, that ineluctable moment, just east of Eden, when eyes are still shining from the afterglow of the Garden, just before sight dims in the light of the world, and pretending trembles upon quickening knowledge.

—from Andrew Lytle, "Myth in a Garden," June 1987



Thomas Fleming (l) and John Howard (r) with Ingersoll Prize winners V.S. Naipaul and Andrew Lytle.

Unlike conscientious Englishmen or Northerners, when Celts and Southerners said they were being lazy, they were not reproaching themselves, but merely describing their state of comfort. They suffered no guilt when they spent their time pleasantly hunting, fishing, dancing, drinking, gambling, fighting, or just loafing and talking.

These are not the characteristics that make great empires, and no Celtic society ever made one, but the Celtic Southern way has two redeeming virtues. First, when outsiders supply the discipline and constancy, Celts are capable of mighty achievements, as British history has shown. Even under the unimaginative rule of England, the Irish and the Welsh produced an almost endless number of poets and playwrights, actors and musicians; and the Scots, for more than two centuries, kept the United Kingdom supplied not only with its best fighting men but also with its most brilliant philosophers, physicians, scientists, and engineers. The Celtic contribution in America has been no less profound.

—from Grady McWhiney, "Celtic Heritage of the Old South," March 1989

Except in the sense that America was settled in new geographic territory, the United States is of course no younger than any other country in the Western world. Its roots stretch deep into the distant past. The Framers of the Constitution and the American people at large were imbued with classical and biblical prejudices and habits that helped shape the work at Philadelphia. From the point of view of what ensures American social and political order, the least significant part of the Constitution is the written document. Far more important is the unwritten constitution, all of those religious, moral, intellectual, and aesthetic habits and attitudes that are implied in the written text. Without them the Constitution would not have been conceived as it was, and without them it could not have been successfully put into practice.

—from Claes G. Ryn, "Cultural Diversity and Unity," June 1993

THE OLD RIGHT

One of the most pernicious legacies of Hitler, Stalin, and Mao is that any political leader responsible for less than, say, three or four million deaths is let off the hook. This hardly seems right, and it was not always so. In fact, there was a time when American conservatives took the lead in publicizing Allied, and especially American, atrocities against Germans. High-level journalists like William Henry Chamberlin, in *America's Second Crusade*, and Freda Utley, in *The High Cost of Vengeance*, pilloried those who had committed what Utley called "our crimes against humanity"—the men who directed the terror-bombing of the German cities, conspired in the expulsion of some 15 million Germans from their ancestral lands in the east (in the course of which about two million died—see de Zayas's *Nemesis at Potsdam*), and plotted the "final solution of the German question" through the Morgenthau plan. Utley even exposed the sham "Dachau trials" of German soldiers and civilians in the first years of the Allied occupation, detailing the use of methods "worthy of the GPU, the Gestapo, and the SS" to extort confessions. She insisted that the same ethical standards had to be applied to victors and vanquished alike. If not, then we were declaring that "Hitler was justified in his belief that 'might makes right.'" Both books were brought out by the late Henry Regnery, the last of the Old Right greats, whose house was the bastion of post-World War II revisionism, publishing works like Charles Callan Tansill's classic, *Back Door to War*.

—from Ralph Raico, "Nazifying the Germans," January 1997

[William E.] Borah's Old Guard Republican enemies considered him a dangerous radical, but his credo was more accurately described by Walter Lippmann in 1936 as "a lineal descendant from the earliest American liberals, an individualist who opposes all concentration of power, political or economic, who is against private privilege and private monopoly, against political bureaucracy and centralized government." He kept a notebook

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of his favorite quotations, and one entry by Oliver Goldsmith seems to summarize his personality and politics: "Great minds are bravely eccentric; they scorn the beaten track."

—from Justin Raimondo, "The Lion of Idaho: William E. Borah and the Progressives," November 1998

[Robert] Frost's belief that we love the things we love for what they are, from our familiarity with them, made him highly critical of those Americans who ignored their local and national loyalties while seeking to embrace an abstract love for the whole world: "We think the word 'provincial' is a shameful word here in America. But . . . you can't be universal without being provincial, can you? It's like trying to embrace the wind." Throughout his life, the poet remained profoundly skeptical that any meaningful or practical and effective love and loyalty could be practiced by any individual beyond nationalism, for mankind in the abstract. Sovereignty began in the conscience of each individual, and extended to his local community and finally to his country, but not to a remote and abstract humanity . . . Frost's skepticism toward Wilson's League of Nations was extended to the United Nations after World War II. . . . The independence of nations was primary to Frost; their interdependences were secondary, because nations, like individuals, needed to be free to pursue their own destiny.

In an interview with Frost in 1957, James Reston summarized his negative conservative social and political views: "He is against everything and everybody that want people to rely on somebody else. He is against the United Nations. He is against the welfare state. He is against conformity and easy slogans and Madison Avenue, and he hasn't seen a President he liked since Grover Cleveland." In 1959 Louis Untermeyer, Frost's lifelong Marxist friend, also summarized what the poet most disliked, but added what he insisted upon:

> He is still against One World, World Federation, Universal Brotherhood, Unity, the breaking down of barriers in the interest of Oneness; he is unalterably against One anything. You may quote him to the effect that "Something there is that does not love a wall," but you can be sure that he much prefers the opposed quotation that "good fences make good neighbors." He insists upon Nature's divisions and differences; in art, as in nature, we want all the differences we can get. In society, too. We want people and nations to maintain their differences—even at the risk of trouble, even at the risk of fighting one another.

Frost did more than pay lip service to individual freedom; he loved personal freedom, for himself and other men and nations, with an intense and constant passion, and he refused to sacrifice any part of his independence and self-reliance for the promises of security by politicians or ideologues, whether national or international.

—from Peter Stanlis, "Robert Frost," August 1992

THE PARTY STATE

In Washington, D.C., access and influence go hand-in-hand; they are the stock and trade of the lobbyist, the lawyer, and the political advisor. They are, as well, the biggest "skill" current officeholders and staff members can take with them when they leave the government.

—from Pat Choate, "Puppets for Nippon," May 1993

People choose sides in civil, fashionable, moral, or metaphysical questions very much as children choose which local football team they will (notionally) support. "I'm the sort of person who supports Everton rather than Liverpool, pretends to adore the Queen Mother and dislike Princess Anne, thinks that Qaddafi is insane and Gorbachev is a nicer chap than Brezhnev, and votes for Mrs. Tiggywinkle while expressing cautious disapproval of her policies." Or in other circles: "I'm the sort that was born under Aquarius, thinks the military-industrial complex controls the Western world, and that 'the scientists' are only not revealing their solution to death, UFO's, and telepathy because they're in league with the Freemasons." Taking a position, like wearing a particular dress or choosing to drink lager, is expressing loyalty to a group, an image of oneself, a particular rhetoric.

—from Stephen R.L. Clark, "Having Opinions," April 1987

As *semper fi* is to Marines, "tax, spend, and elect" is to Congress. When political charlatans threw off the confining shackles of limited government once and for all during the New Deal, they soon deduced just how easy the task of buying votes became. Congressmen were more than happy to console dysfunctional families and anesthetize them from the devastations of parental inattention and folly, as well as the toll from government intervention in the economy, to get themselves reelected to a cushy job with no heavy lifting. One glance at C-SPAN provides more than ample evidence that flimflammery is still in session and flourishing. Note how they posture, what they debate, and how they are all so glad to be part of such a distinguished body. You might soon forget that they produce nothing in society except managed chaos, empty pocketbooks, and hot air. But they, like everyone else who pretends to an earthly throne, know what is best for us—while we are more than happy to let them govern our lives. What is the price of slavery compared to the joy we find in self-justification for wrongdoing?

—from Robert K. Dornan, "The Suppression of Public Virtue," August 1995

What the neoconservative logic comes down to is this. The United States has a moral responsibility to run the world. But the citizens are too stupid to understand this. That is why we cannot use democratic institutions like Congress in this ambition. We must use the executive power of the presidency. it must have total control over foreign affairs, and never bow to congressional carping.

Once this point is conceded, the game is over. The demands of a centralized and all-powerful presidency and its interventionist foreign policy are ideologically reinforcing. One needs the other. If the presidency is supreme in global affairs, it will be supreme in domestic affairs. If it is supreme at home, there will be no states' rights, no absolute property rights, no true liberty from government oppression. The continued centralization of government in the presidency represents the end of America and its civilization.

—from Llewellyn H. Rockwell, Jr., "Down With the Presidency," October 1997

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THE SERVILE STATE

According to the best evidence I am able to collect, there are Streetniks only in the central cities of the four largest metropolitan areas [of Tennessee]. Why, for example, aren't there street people in Murfreesboro? Murfreesboro is one tenth the size of Nashville. It should have one tenth the number of homeless—if Nashville has 2,000, that would be 200. If Nashville has 900, that would be 90. Yet Murfreesboro has none. Neither do any of the other medium-size and small towns in Tennessee. The answer is simple: There are no services for the homeless in Murfreesboro. As soon as services are established, there will be street people. It's called "symbiotic relationship" by community ecologists.

It is the "critical mass" concept. Already there are people barely hanging on . . . but they are hanging on. With the establishment of street services, social fusion would occur, pulling the weakest loose from the fabric of the community onto the pavement. The stage is set for growth of the street persons to the limit imposed by the community. The greater the services, the larger the number.

—Dan McMurray, "Hard Living on Easy Street," August 1988

TRADITION AND VIRTUE

Both liberals—who dream of the "universal nation," that tower of Babel united only through a common hatred of the West and disdain for standards—and "conservatives"—who idealize the politics of "development" and "growth" and see Americans as united only by a love of material gratification—are . . . helping to hasten the extinction of men like my father, and with them, the America both of Washington and Jefferson *and* of Boone, Crockett, and Houston. They swear that the wet-backed invaders share our "American values" and that the ponytailed trash, men who have not taken the time to master their trade, are doing all of us a service. That is the way these folks, the liberals and conservatives who grow increasingly indistinguishable from one another, think: They think that foreigners who tell polltakers that they "believe in" abstractions like "democracy" or "capitalism" have as much claim on this country as American citizens, that building "housing units" is the same as building a home, and that being an American is like being a member of a club that anybody can join. To these "mainstream" liberals and conservatives, "culture" *means* ideological adherence to abstractions; national character is *defined* by shopping habits and not by all the things that are lost when men like my father are run out of business and become extinct, when a way of life that includes the look of a people, the way they carry themselves, the clothes they wear, the foods they eat, and the way they speak is forgotten.

—from Wayne Allensworth, "The Vanishing Craftsman: A Cultural Barometer," February 1994

One of the characteristic losses of our age has been in the reduction of hope, along with faith and love, to mere feeling, an event of "body chemistry." We seem to have mostly forgotten that these were once thought of as paramount virtues, requiring practice. It is nevertheless true that hope, if it is to be authentic and if it is to last, must find its work, and this must be doable work, work that one can reasonably expect to accomplish.

This way of thinking, which may be necessary to our survival as human beings, goes directly against the current of our public education and public ambition, which never contemplate the propriety or the desirability or the pleasure of work on a small scale. We do not want to find small answers to small problems, or partial answers to parts of problems; we want to find heroic answers, global answers to global problems. We tell our children, "You can be everything you want to be," which is, in every case, a lie. We believe that we are entitled to large, spectacular, perfect solutions invented by scientists or politicians. We believe that we all ought to work in an office and receive a large salary.

The result, altogether expectable, is work done poorly by people who think themselves too good to do it. The result is disappointment, cynicism, bitterness, boredom, contempt for ordinary life and ordinary pleasures—a state of mind that has afflicted both life and art.

—from Wendell Berry, "The Country Writer," June 1995

To reject all tradition because it is handed down from the past is to cut oneself off from the past. This is an impossibility for any form of Christianity, even more so than for Judaism, for the Christian faith is based on the historical reality of very significant divine interventions: the Incarnation, the Crucifixion, the Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus. Traditional observances, whether truly religious (such as the Communion liturgy) or more folkloric (such as the Christmas tree), help bond members of the rising generations to the past on which their faith depends. This is one reason that the banning of all traditional Christian symbols from public schools and facilities is socially destructive even in our "pluralistic" secular society: It promotes the severance of children from their cultural past and contributes to the breakdown of—dare we say it—traditional morality. Without tradition, we rapidly lose touch with our ancestors, with our fathers and mothers in faith, and soon with our own parents.

The opposition to tradition in religion once centered on Roman Catholic tradition, but today it extends to all Christianity. It stems from the conviction, often a simple presupposition, that the past is bad, the present better, and the future best of all. From this perspective, all that has been handed down from the past is undesirable and should be dismissed, the Mass in Latin as well as the Christmas tree in schools. Forgotten are those words of Jeremiah . . . "Stand ye in the old ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, wherein is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls." The verse continues with what seems to be the war cry of much of the current society: "But they said, We will not walk therein" (Jeremiah 6:16).

—from Harold O.J. Brown, "Tradition, Old and New," December 2000

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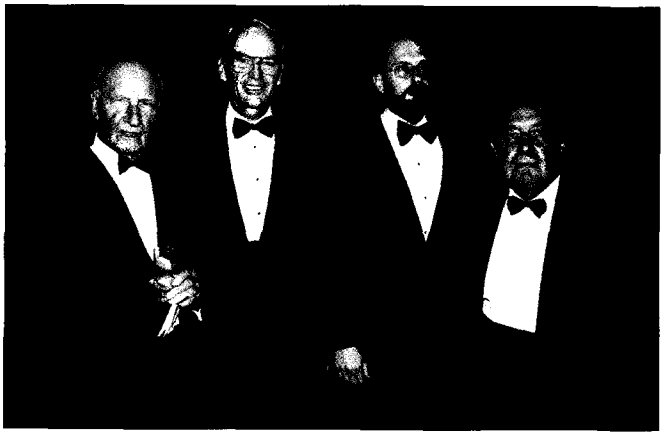

Richard M. Weaver Award winner Josef Pieper (l) and T.S. Eliot Award winner Octavio Paz (r) pose with John Howard and Thomas Fleming.

The poetry of tradition is rooted in human occupations as they are pursued from dawn to dark, from season to season, on land and sea, through harvest and winter, in war or peace. It is associated with festivals and rituals, both sacred and secular; and the distance between sacred and secular is not forbiddingly immense, as in our modern times. It is an art designed for oral performance, preserved in human memory and the oral tradition that also preserves ballad and folk song; and maybe it is lost for that very reason. And even when written by known poets, great poets indeed, it still reflects the standards and qualities of a poetry sung or spoken rather than a poetry read with the eye only. It has a place in life, a use in life; it is not a fancy thing, not a luxury, not a toy, not sheer entertainment—though it has the faculty, all the same, in Sidney's phrase, of holding children from play and old men from the chimney corner. It is a recognized function of civilized life . . .

—*from Donald Davidson, "The Lyric of Tradition," December 1989*

The false mysticism of an arbitrarily constructed jargon as well as the exactness of a pseudo-philosophical scientistic terminology—both are making us forget that the road leading from true philosophy to genuine poetry has already been paved: It is only the water of plain language, by its undemanding simplicity permitting the light to penetrate it to the bottom, that is capable of being changed into the wine of poetry.

—*from Josef Pieper, "On Clarity," April 1988*

Speaking for myself, I find that both high culture and moral philosophy are too often in the hands of people who, while they have excellent judgment, have a limited sense of humor. The arts of ridicule and satire can be employed to demolish vulgarity, stupidity, crude and cruel behavior. Ridicule is a strong and effective weapon. It should, I think, be studied as a means of expressing an honest literature in the world today.

For myself, moreover, I cannot dismiss any manifestation of mass culture *en bloc*. We should always observe; we should find what is preservable and precious among the welter of cultural phenomena with which we are constantly bombarded. This needs self-discipline, it needs self-training on the part of those gifted with ingenuity of approach and with comprehension. Culture, after all, concerns the human spirit. A too narrow and severe discrimination can tend to annihilate ourselves, everything around us. And all to no effect.

—*from Muriel Spark, "Living With Culture," April 1993*

In life, of course, there are many forms which are meaningful in themselves and of great value. I think, for instance, of good manners. Some of my college students of the 1960's, believing themselves to be naturally good and loving, rejected good manners along with certain other things, such as attractive dress and correct grammar, which they believed to be artificial. That was a sad mistake. Manners are no more coercive than a dance step is coercive, and indeed they are liberating: Seating ladies and opening doors for people, and writing thank-you notes to grandmother, are acts of compliance with a code, but they also facilitate social dealings and the growth and expression of true kindness. The forms of religion can also be benignly enabling. Eleanor Clark, when living in Italy, found herself drawn toward the Roman Church, and she asked an Italian Catholic friend how she could best find out whether Catholicism was for her. The friend said, "Go to Mass. Kneel when the others kneel. Do and say what the others do and say. Ultimately you will have a Catholic experience."

—*from Richard Wilbur, "Good Manners, Good Literature," September 1997*

THE UTOPIAN NIGHTMARE

If we cannot expect the peace people to listen to reason, it is because theirs is a movement springing from the decadence of Christian life and from the moral paralysis of those whose lives have been robbed of any transcendental dimension. The curious belief of the peace people that the specter of nuclear annihilation can be exorcised by a series of public moral gestures becomes intelligible when we attribute to them a profane variation on Christian eschatology, from which divine providence and original sin have both been deleted, leaving only a fury of moral activism and the groundless certainty that the obdurate realities of history and human nature can be overcome by the sheer power of moral commitment.

—*from John Gray, "The New Eschatology of Peace," April 1989*

Advocates of collective security who wish to substitute concepts of "justice" for "national aggrandizement" greatly underestimate the ability to win wide acceptance of what constitutes justice when vital interests clash. The same problem of subjective interpretation applies to branding one side or another as the "aggressor." The related principle, that borders are never to be changed by force, is tantamount to proclaiming that the present divisions of the world are so perfect they should be frozen in time. This is untenable, as the world has always been a dynamic system, something of which Americans should be well aware given the role westward expansion has played in American history and mythology. The application of universal ideals (which are, in fact, not universally accepted) divorced from practical

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politics and concrete considerations of security, geography, resources, and aspirations is simply unsuited to the world as it is.

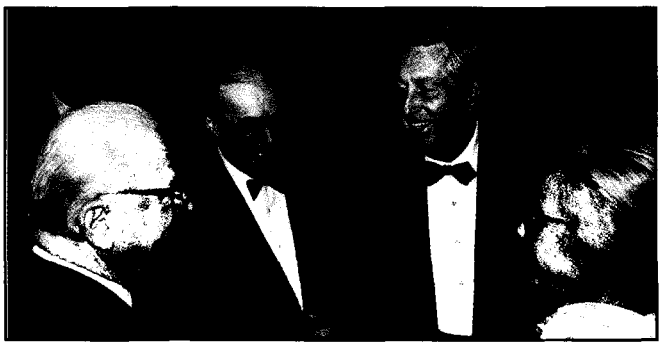
—from William R. Hawkins, "The Surrender of Political and Military Sovereignty," October 1995

It was fashionable, for a time, to ask the silly question, "If we can put a man on the moon, why can't we solve our social problems?" The reason we cannot solve our social problems is precisely the reason we *can* put a man on the moon. That is to say, it was our pragmatism in general and our scientific and technological mentality in particular that made our great material achievements possible. The essence of this mentality is the problem-solving approach. The scientific method isolates problems and solves them: It cannot take the broader view, for anything beyond the immediately demonstrable, testable, measurable, and provable is by definition unscientific. Americans are parodies of the scientific mentality: When anything goes wrong, we fix it, and do not take into account the possibility that our principles may be unsound. We have, for instance, been appalled to learn in recent years that our children are reaching college without having learned to read. Some people responded to the discovery by seriously proposing that we should reorganize the entire educational system from kindergarten upward—and they were branded elitists, racists, or reactionary dodos. Far fewer people considered the possibility that the commitment to universal education is inherently futile, and that other means of civilizing children should be explored. Instead, the nation did what it always does: It tackled the immediate problem by instituting remedial reading classes in college and by dispensing with literacy tests.

—from Forrest McDonald, "On the Study of History," February 1991

Frivolity has in the 20th century become a plague of Western societies; and not least of contemporary American society. Of course, many of the greatest achievements of our Western societies and of the United States in particular have fostered this frivolity. The technological and economic progress that have made life easier have obscured our grasp of the fundamental difficulties of human existence. The admirable progress of scientific knowledge and of medical science have made us think that there are no insoluble problems. Nothing is thought to be beyond the powers of the ratiocinative mind, provided with sufficient powers to realize its aspirations. The progress of science, it is thought, will release us from moral obligation and moral dilemmas. The reverence for human life has become fainter. Frivolity in the face of serious things: That is the charge that I make against collectivist liberalism.

—from Edward Shils, "Liberalism: Collectivist and Conservative," July 1989



Edward Shils (l) chats with Rockford Institute board members Henry Regnery and Clyde and Marian Sluhan.

THE WRITER AND HIS WORLD

Art happens, said Whistler; *die Rose ist ohne Warum*, the rose has no why, wrote Angelus Silesius. To explain beauty is to explain it away. . . . When a literary experiment is a failure, as in the case of *Finnegans Wake*, we worship it and we take good care not to read it; when it succeeds, as in the cases of the Lewis Carroll books and *Leaves of Grass*, we think of it as easy and inevitable.

—from Jorge Luis Borges, "On Walt Whitman," March 1984

As a small boy, entranced by the written word, I never had the slightest desire to drive a locomotive, pilot an aircraft, captain a ship. The supreme achievement seemed to me to be that of one who had written a book: any kind of book. All through my teenage years I struggled with the short story, the novel, the play, the poem. I was like the man in the story who leapt on his horse and tried to ride off in all directions. Another difficulty lay in finding something to write about. I looked at the circumstance of my small-town rural life and decided, with supreme snobbishness, that it didn't match up to my literary ambitions. Unfailingly, I wrote about worlds I had never known. Poetry—and poetry was becoming my principal interest—was away and somewhere else. Nobody told me that the raw material of poetry, like the raw, material of all art, resides quite simply under one's nose.

—from Charles Causley, "What Gift?" February 1991

Our images of vice are well defined, dramatic, sharp-edged, and energetic. And why not? We live in vice, all of us; we are handy to its smells and tastes, its appetites and brutalities. Our visions of virtue, however, are pallid and dropsical, puny and naive. When we paint an urban utopia, it turns out looking like a plush hotel lobby; when we draw a rural one, it looks like an expensive golf resort. Twenty-four karat boulevards and a mastery of harp technique: These are our common images for heaven. Dante was able to depict a paradise made up of infinite gradations of light, of the kinds and degrees of virtue that described God's goodness; these were immediately apprehendable by the senses, the mind, and the soul. Yet it is that poet's images of hell that most people recall. In fact, most readers of Dante never

From left: John Howard, Forrest McDonald, Charles Causley, Thomas Fleming.

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venture further than his *Inferno*. If Dante's paradise has not fixed firmly in the minds of most of us—and it has had 600 years to do so—how shall the contemporary writer successfully portray a vision of the ideal, his faith being so much shakier than Dante's, his intellect so much less powerful, and his talent dwarfish in comparison?

Only a very few artists have been able to offer a convincing delineation of moral triumph, and I have a doleful feeling that none of them is alive at this hour. This then is the first certain failure the experienced writer knows he must face: the inability to outline with any confidence the figure of the ideal. And without this foundation his work, no matter how expertly fashioned, will fall short of his hopes.

—from Fred Chappell, "Writer and Community," May 1994

The problems of the literary scene are exacerbated by the attitude of many readers who, as in other products and other aspects of our society, haunted by brand names and victimized by the culture of celebrity, depend on publicity, advertising, and book reviews more than their own good judgment and taste. Strangely, the book-reading public, relatively small as it may be, seems to be singularly easy to manipulate. Add to the hustle of publishers the unavoidable truth that so much that is published, fiction and nonfiction alike, does not speak to or about the lives and values of most Americans, and you have a situation that looks unlikely to change for the better any time soon. New technology may help a little bit—depending on the character of the people who control it. Small presses, operating with low overhead and modest goals, may keep the idea of literature alive, if not well, in the future. Right now some of the university presses are doing some good books and picking up where the big commercial houses have failed. But a glance at the university press books advertised in PMLA does not inspire hope for the future. Read the catalogue of Stanley Fish's Duke University Press . . . and weep.

—from George Garrett, "Reading and Weeping," May 1998

The most astounding scholarly discoveries of today cannot help us in solving [the] problems of human identity.

Literature, however, *is* relevant to these problems. Literature and its only subject matter, the only game it pursues: the human person. Literature has pursued this game for millennia. It keeps pulling out of the anonymous human mass an individual (always in the singular, never in the plural) to whom it gives the body and soul, face and character, and whom it leads through a certain course of events toward, perhaps, an immortality. It pursues that person's earthly fate. It lights up the brief moment between two dark unknowns: before and after. It insists that the individual whose life it illuminates is unrepeatable, that he is a person, and thus different from anything else in the universe. It diligently researches that person's virtues and trespasses, dreams and crimes. Sometimes it offers forgiveness, at other times it is unyielding and austere as if it itself had to answer for its judgments to a higher authority.

—from Zbigniew Herbert, "Invisible But Present," August 1996

The only true verisimilitude for sane and healthy human beings is surprisingness; it is the mentally sick who are predictable, and their predictability constitutes their mental sickness. What makes a long marriage possible, so that its participants do not die of boredom with each other, is precisely our capacity to reinvent ourselves and each other, to play the storyteller with our lives and surprise our audience. It is the automatisms of our spouses that are intolerable; the very thing that makes a novelistic character believable is what makes a marriage impossible. No wonder that the easiest kind of novel to write is one about divorce! In this sense the realist psychological novel can only be about damaged people.

Not that complete people act randomly; rather, they are autonomous, they make up their rules through a process of reflection and artistic synthesis that makes perfect sense after it has come into existence and been explained, but which cannot be predicted beforehand by psychological or sociological laws. And the mechanisms of this freedom are to a large extent implicit in the classical artistic tools: in the literary field, poetic meter, dramatic role-playing, sacrificial and performative action, mythic archetypes, and narrative structure, among others. . . .

Literary forms are necessary: Experience has to be transmitted in some agreed or readily comprehensible way. But certain forms, like fashions in dress, can at times become extreme. And then these forms, far from crystallizing or sharpening experience, can falsify or be felt as a burden.

—from V.S. Naipaul, "Some Thoughts on Being a Writer," May 1987

Novelists are persons who happen to see life, and the behavior of human beings, in vivid interior images—though in very different ways—so that in a sense Proust has more in common with Harold Robbins than with persons who do not find images taking shape in the mind. . . .

If a character in a novel bears no resemblance whatsoever to any human being we have ever met—nor could ever meet whatever the circumstances, including reincarnation—there is likely to be something wrong in the writing.

—from Anthony Powell, "Literature and the Real Person," January 1985

Just over the mountain from Dubrovnik, Kupres, black, burnt-out, choked with men and cattle, writhed silent among the wooded hills. Not far from it lay the immense Perucica, the last European jungle.

Let the Cross and the Mace clash,
Whose head bursts, woe is him!

sang Petar Petrovic Njegos, prince-bishop of the 19th-century Montenegro. Seven feet tall, this mortal enemy of Bosnian and Hercegovinian Muslims died at 38, a victim of border wars, beheadings, impalements, and an eclectic, European knowledge.

—from Momcilo Selic, "A Dirge for Bosnia," May 1988

Scott P. Richert, Chilton Williamson, Jr., and Christopher Check serenade Thomas Fleming at* Chronicles' *20th Anniversary Dinner.

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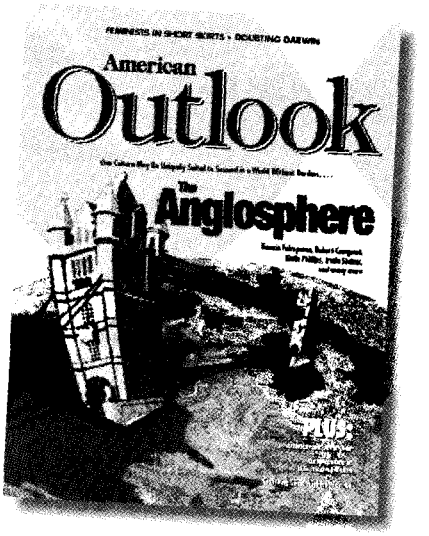

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